

## Openings

- Good afternoon Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher and Honorable Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee,
- My name is Rita Gray, and I am honored to speak before you today in support of the Fair Chance Housing Act. As a Directly impacted member of this community I am someone who deeply cares about fairness, justice, and equality. Today I am speaking from personal experience as someone who makes enough money to cover their expenses but faces discrimination when seeking housing. I believe this legislation is a crucial step forward in ensuring that all individuals, regardless of their past mistakes, have access to stable housing and a chance to rebuild their lives.

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## Mid-Sections

- Despite my ability to afford housing, I find myself in a frustrating situation where I am considered homeless because of the lingering stigma attached to my past involvement with the criminal legal system. This reality is not only dehumanizing but also deeply unjust. What is the point of working hard and making enough to survive if I am continuously denied the opportunity to establish a stable home for myself?
- The truth is, the inability to secure housing due to past mistakes reinforces a cycle of instability that makes it very difficult to break free from the shadows of the past. Despite my intentional efforts to move forward and contribute positively to society, I am constantly reminded of the barriers that stand in my way.
- It is a fundamental injustice that individuals like myself, who have fulfilled our societal obligations and are striving to rebuild our lives, are still met with discrimination and exclusion in the housing market.
- Furthermore, This not only undermines our sense of dignity and self-worth but also hinders our ability to fully reintegrate into society as productive and self-sufficient members. The Fair Chance Housing Act, represents a glimmer of hope for individuals like myself who are trapped in this cycle of instability and dehumanization. By prohibiting housing discrimination based on criminal history and promoting fair evaluation criteria, this legislation offers a glimmer of hope for a brighter future where everyone, regardless of their past, has the opportunity to establish a stable home and rebuild their lives

## Closing

- I urge you to support the Fair Chance Housing Act and take a stand for justice, equality, and compassion. Every individual, regardless of their past mistakes, deserves a fair chance to rebuild their lives and contribute positively to society. This bill represents a crucial step in the right direction, and we urge you to support this legislation for the betterment of our communities and the individuals within them.
- Thank you for considering our perspective, and we hope that you vote to advance this legislation