



**Testimony HB 1163
Judiciary Committee
March 9, 2023
Position: FAVORABLE**

Dear Chairman Clippinger & Members of Judiciary Committee:

The Community Development Network of Maryland (CDN) is the voice for Maryland's community development sector and serves nearly 200 member organizations. CDN—focuses on small affordable housing developers, housing counseling agencies and community-based non-profits across the state of Maryland. The mission of CDN is to promote, strengthen and advocate for the community development sector throughout Maryland's urban, suburban and rural communities. CDN envisions a state in which all communities are thriving and where people of all incomes have abundant opportunities for themselves and their families.

HB 1163 would prohibit discrimination based on an individual's criminal record in public accommodations, commercial leasing, housing, and employment and by certain licensed or regulated person.

In Maryland, more than 7,000 people are released from custody by the criminal legal system and granted an opportunity to renew and rebuild their lives as private citizens each year.

Most justice-involved persons face challenges meeting basic needs, including housing and access to community services. A lack of decent housing exacerbates barriers to finding employment and can increase the chances of the formerly incarcerated becoming homeless and having future involvement with the legal system. According the Enterprise foundation, people leaving incarceration are ten times more likely to be homeless than the general public.

Given the higher rates of justice involvement among Black, Indigenous and other people of color (BIPOC), any barriers to accessing housing following an incarceration can only exacerbate existing racial and ethnic disparities in housing outcomes. Securing stable housing in communities with access to employment and health services are critical for t successful reentry.

Maryland desperately needs innovative models for people formerly incarcerated to have safe, stable homes as they return to their communities and rebuild their lives.

We respectfully request a favorable report for HB 1163.

Claudia Wilson Randall, Executive Director, Community Development Network of Maryland