

SB0514\_RichardKaplowitz\_FAV

02/06/2025

Richard Keith Kaplowitz Frederick,  
MD 21703-7134

**TESTIMONY ON SB#0514 - POSITION: FAVORABLE**

Landlord and Tenant - Residential Leases - Prospective Tenant Criminal History Records Check  
(Maryland Fair Chance Housing Act)

**TO:** Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee

**FROM:** Richard Keith Kaplowitz

**My name is Richard Kaplowitz. I am a resident of District 3, Frederick County. I am submitting this testimony in support of/ SB#/0514, Landlord and Tenant - Residential Leases - Prospective Tenant Criminal History Records Check (Maryland Fair Chance Housing Act)**

“Formerly incarcerated people typically return to low-income communities where resources, particularly affordable, accessible housing, are scarce—there is a national shortage of 7 million rental units affordable and available to extremely low-income households. A criminal record poses an additional barrier to accessing affordable, accessible housing for justice involved individuals, placing them at risk of housing instability, homelessness, and ultimately recidivism.”<sup>1</sup>

The United States has the most extensive carceral system in the world, encompassing federal, state, local facilities, and tribal centers. National data show that the United States incarcerates people at significant rates: annually, 600,000 people enter prison, and 10 million spend time in jail.<sup>2</sup>

This bill attempts to circumvent these harms inflicted on formerly incarcerated individuals by prohibiting a landlord from requiring or requesting from a prospective tenant certain information relating to criminal history and prohibiting a landlord from considering certain information when evaluating the prospective tenant. It is not a blanket action intended to shield all formerly incarcerated people but is conditional on the offense(s) that lead to the jailing through permitting a landlord to consider certain criminal history information. That consideration will be permitted prior to extending a conditional offer to a prospective tenant. The bill establishes conditions requiring the landlord to consider certain information provided by a prospective tenant relating to a criminal history records check for guidance in making an ethical and moral judgement of the applicant. The intent of the bill overall is to make it more possible that someone who has paid their debt to society can re-enter society and find housing to accelerate that acculturation back into society.

**I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on SB0514.**

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<sup>1</sup> [https://nlihc.org/sites/default/files/AG-2020/6-07\\_Housing-Access-for-People-with-Criminal-Records.pdf](https://nlihc.org/sites/default/files/AG-2020/6-07_Housing-Access-for-People-with-Criminal-Records.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> [Mass Incarceration: The Whole Pie 2022](https://fairhousingjustice.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/Criminal-Legal-Records_-An-Impediment-to-Housing-Choice-FULL-w_-Cover.pdf) reference found in [https://fairhousingjustice.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/Criminal-Legal-Records\\_-An-Impediment-to-Housing-Choice-FULL-w\\_-Cover.pdf](https://fairhousingjustice.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/Criminal-Legal-Records_-An-Impediment-to-Housing-Choice-FULL-w_-Cover.pdf)