

I am Aje Tajaera Brown, I am a single mother of three kids, and I am submitting testimony in **favor** of SB 514 – The Maryland Fair Chance Housing Act.

In 2019 I was convicted of misdemeanor theft. I was sentenced to six months imprisonment, all of which was waived in favor of 18 months supervised probation, which I completed.

In mid to late July 2024, I applied for housing in the City of Frederick Maryland. This was the apartment complex my grandmother lived in, and I wanted to live closer to her. As part of my application, they did a criminal background check. After completing my background check, my application was denied for having this on my record.

When I attempted to challenge the denial of my application on this basis, I was told “our policy is, if you have criminal conviction within the last seven years, you are denied and there is nothing we can do about it.” They then upheld the denial of my application. This meant I was not able to spend the last few months of my grandmother’s life with her, because she passed away. I will never get that time back.

The Fair Chance in Housing Act will help protect Marylanders like myself from being denied housing due to low level offenses like mine.

I urge the Committee to issue a FAVORABLE report on Senate Bill 514.