

Executive Director
Jessica A. Quincosa, Esq.

Deputy Director
Kayla Williams-Campbell, Esq.

Director of Litigation and Advocacy
Lisa Sarro, Esq.

Director of Operations
Claudia V. Aguirre

Interim Development Director
Jordan Colquitt

Managing, Attorney
Ivy Finkenstadt, Esq.

Supervising Attorneys
Warren Buff, Esq.
Kathleen Hughes, Esq.
Amy B. Siegel, Esq.

Attorneys
Adebola Adedoyin, Esq.
Vanessa Agbar, Esq.
Golnaz Alemousavi, Esq.
Jennifer Clark, Esq.
Katherine Cooke-Caraway, Esq.
Sheree Hughes, Esq.
Lekwon Imoke, Esq.
Deborah Kadiri, Esq.
John Kowalko, Esq.
Eric Orr, Esq.
Hina Rodriguez, Esq.
Peter Spann, Esq.
Jawaid Stationwala, Esq.
Tangi Turner, Esq.
Riana Yaman, Esq.

Equal Justice Works Fellows
Ashley Blankenship, Esq.
Emory Cole II, Esq.
Kency Nittler, Esq.

Staff
Jonathan Asprilla
Ashley Cartagena
Franklin Escobar
Elmer Espinoza
Stephanie Espinoza
Anna Goldfaden
Maria Teresa Herren
Flor Lemus
Allison Nardick
Stacey Palmer
Micaela Ramos
Abel Reyes
Glenda Soto
Alejandra Sorto
Samir Vasquez Romero
Karen Zayas



**SB0514 –
Landlord and Tenant - Residential Leases - Prospective
Tenant Criminal History Records Check
(Maryland Fair Chance Housing Act)
Hearing of the Judicial Proceedings Committee, February 6,
2025**

Position: Favorable

To the Honorable Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee:

Community Legal Services (CLS) supports Senate Bill 514, which limits the use of tenant criminal records in housing applications.

CLS is a nonprofit civil legal aid provider dedicated to advocating for and maintaining the rights of Maryland's underrepresented populations. We promote economic, housing, and family stability and success by providing quality legal representation to those who otherwise would not have equal access to justice. We represent individuals with legal issues related to housing, consumer, family law, and other matters, sometimes all at once. Though our work, we see very clearly that having safe, stable housing is critical for success in every aspect of our clients' lives and the lives of their children.

SB 514 is critical to ensuring that individuals with past criminal records are not permanently barred from obtaining stable housing. Housing is a fundamental necessity and a key factor in reducing recidivism, promoting economic stability, and strengthening families. Yet, far too often, individuals - many of whom have served their time or were never convicted - face near-automatic denial of rental housing based on old or minor offenses. These blanket policies disproportionately harm low-income communities and people of color, perpetuating cycles of poverty and homelessness.

Through our legal advocacy, CLS has worked with Marylanders who struggle to find housing due to criminal record screening policies that fail to account for rehabilitation, mitigating circumstances, or the passage of time. Many of our clients are parents seeking stable housing for their children, individuals who have completed workforce training programs, and community members who are otherwise fully qualified tenants but are rejected based solely on records that have no bearing on their ability to be responsible renters.

P.O. BOX 374 RIVER DALE, MD 20738-0374

Maryland has made great strides in recent years in advancing criminal justice reform, including efforts to expand expungement and efforts to remove barriers to employment for justice-involved individuals. However, without access to stable housing, these individuals are at a huge disadvantage as they seek to rebuild and then maintain economic and other stability in their lives.

For these reasons, **Community Legal Services urges the committee to issue a favorable report on SB 514.** Ensuring fair access to housing is not just a matter of economic justice, it is essential for the well-being of families, communities, and our state as a whole.

Please feel free to contact Jessica Quincosa, Executive Director, and Lisa Sarro, Director of Litigation and Advocacy, with any questions at quincosa@clspgc.org and sarro@clspgc.org, respectively.