

Dear Honorable Chair Valderrama, Vice Chair Charkoudian, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Linda Girdner and I live in Gambrills, MD. I urge you to **support HB1073** Landlord and Tenant - Residential Leases - Prospective Tenant Criminal History Records Check (**Maryland Fair Chance Housing Act**). This bill prohibits 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.

Housing access is one of the most significant challenges facing individuals returning to the community after incarceration. A stable living situation is essential for successful reentry, yet returning citizens face numerous legal and practical barriers to securing housing.

As Bryan Stevenson of the Equal Justice Initiative has said: "Each of us is more than the worst thing we've ever done." After a person has paid their dues to society that person's rental application should not be considered any differently than another's by the landlord in the initial stages.

However, the bill recognizes the concerns landlords would have relating to certain crimes, especially if they were recent. The Act would permit a landlord to consider particular criminal history information prior to extending a conditional offer to a prospective tenant and require the landlord to consider certain information provided by a prospective tenant relating to a criminal history records check.

I support "Ban the Box" for Housing, meaning that it would delay criminal history inquiries until later in the application process, require individualized assessments, and limit the lookback period for criminal records

Therefore, I urge you to **vote favorable on HB1073** Landlord and Tenant - Residential Leases - Prospective Tenant Criminal History Records Check (Maryland Fair Chance Housing Act).

Thank you for your consideration.

Linda Girdner

Member,

Showing Up for Racial Justice, Annapolis and Anne Arundel County