



TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB1073:

Maryland Fair Chance Housing Act

March 5, 2026

From: Treveric Speaks

To: Members of the Economic Matters Committee

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

My name is Terry Speaks, and I serve as a Leadership Development Organizer with Out For Justice. At Out For Justice, Inc. (OFJ), we work with families navigating complex systems every day, a grassroots organization whose mission is to engage, educate, and empower individuals impacted by the legal system.

I am in strong support of HB1073, the Fair Chance Housing Act, which would provide access to housing, a basic need for all humans, despite the mistakes or past records. My support for this bill is not just as an advocate, but as someone who has lived this reality.

I spent ten years of my life incarcerated. During that time, I worked on myself. I prepared for reentry. I made a commitment that when I came home, I would live differently and contribute positively to my community. And I have done exactly that. I am employed, earn enough income to afford housing, and my credit meets the standards required for an apartment. Yet the hardest barrier I continue to face is housing.

I have completed applications, paid non-refundable fees, and met every financial qualification; only to be denied because of my record. Not because I cannot pay. Not because I am irresponsible. Not because I am unqualified. But simply because of a past conviction.

That rejection sends a message that no matter how much you grow, no matter how hard you work, no matter how much you contribute, you will never be fully accepted. Housing is not a luxury, it is a human right. It is stability. It is dignity. It is the foundation that allows someone to maintain employment, reconnect with family, and truly reintegrate into society.

When we deny housing based solely on a record, we are not promoting safety; we are creating instability. We are pushing people toward homelessness and desperation instead of providing a fair opportunity to rebuild.



The Fair Chance Housing Act does not guarantee anyone housing. It guarantees fairness. It ensures that people are judged on who they are today such as their income, their credit, their rental history, not solely on who they were at their worst moment.

If we truly believe in second chances, then we must remove the barriers that make success nearly impossible.

I respectfully urge this committee to vote favorably on HB1073. And I want to sincerely thank Del. Lewis for sponsoring this critical legislation.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,
Terry Speaks, He/him
Leadership Development Organizer
Out For Justice Inc.