



Testimony In Support of the Maryland Fair Chance Housing Act
HB 1073 / SB 937

Thibault Manekin, CEO of Seawall

Good afternoon, and thank you for the opportunity to be here today.

My name is Thibault Manekin. I'm a real estate developer in Baltimore and the CEO of Seawall, where we develop and operate multifamily housing across the city.

I'm here today in strong support of the Fair Chance Housing Act.

I've been fortunate to build a community of incredible friends in Baltimore. Some of the most inspiring people I know are men who have been impacted by the criminal justice system—men who have served long sentences, who came home, did the hard work, got educated, and are now artists, entrepreneurs, leaders, and advocates in our city.

One of those men is my friend Thomas Anderson, who you've heard from.

Recently, Thomas shared something with me that stopped me in my tracks.

Without telling me, he applied to rent an apartment in one of our Seawall buildings. He was in the process of looking for housing, but – more than that – he wanted to understand what the process felt like for someone with a record like his.

His application was denied.

When he told me, I was embarrassed.

Here is a man who is helping lead BUILD, one of the most impactful organizations in Baltimore, someone who is actively making our city safer, stronger, and more connected than I ever could—and he couldn't rent an apartment in a building that I helped create.

That can't be the system we stand behind.

If we truly believe in second chances, then our housing policies need to reflect that.

This bill is not just about fairness—it's about unlocking human potential, strengthening our communities, and aligning our practices with the values we say we hold.

I'm proud to stand in support of it, alongside many of my colleagues in the development community.