



**HB 1073 - Landlord and Tenant – Residential Leases – Prospective Tenant Criminal History  
Records Check (Maryland Fair Chance Housing Act)**

**Hearing before the House Environment and Transportation Committee,  
March 5, 2026**

**Position: FAVORABLE**

To whom it may concern,

My company – Kizuna Solutions Inc. – believes House Bill 1073 (HB 1073) is a critical measure for community safety by ensuring that our returning Maryland residents are given an equitable opportunity to secure housing.

Kizuna is the decision intelligence layer for background checks, helping organizations implement smart, fast, and defensible risk mitigation systems. Our mission is to build mutual trust so businesses and landlords can manage risk without losing great candidates. We offer science-backed risk assessment technology, built alongside leading criminologists and labor economists, so that businesses can make informed decisions based on reality rather than assumption.

Housing and employment are essential for building stability post-incarceration and mitigating the chance of recidivism. If we continue to put up barriers for people who are trying to rebuild their lives, we will continue to perpetuate the circumstances that often lead people to commit crimes, including poverty, homelessness, and mental health disorders.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, it is critical that those who have been through the criminal justice system have the opportunity to secure safe housing.

Decades of criminology research proves that recidivism risk declines rapidly each year a person remains conviction-free.<sup>2</sup> However, people with past criminal histories are often denied housing for records that are years—even decades—old and for records that pose no relevant risk to housing safety. **Passage of HB 1073 is a necessary step to protect Marylanders from the federal stripping of all fair housing protections the Trump Administration has undertaken.** The Obama and Biden era memorandums issued guidance that prospective tenants should not be denied based solely on arrest records and that tenant screening policies should accurately distinguish between “criminal conduct that indicates a demonstrable risk to resident safety and/or property and criminal conduct that does not.” Further, these memorandums outlined that denying an applicant for their criminal history may be a pretext for unequal treatment of individuals because of their race, color, national origin, disability, or another protected characteristic. On November 25, 2025, the Trump Administration’s Department of Housing and Urban Development rescinded both of these memorandums, reverting to guidance from the early 1990s. Maryland needs to fight against the administration’s failure to protect fair protections for our residents that benefit all community members.

HB 1073 would (1) give prospective tenants fair consideration when trying to find a home, (2) reduce recidivism rates in Maryland thereby increasing public safety, and (3) give many more Marylanders the opportunity to pursue career and educational opportunities that they might otherwise be limited in obtaining due to limited housing opportunities. Additionally, due to historic institutionalized racial disparities in the criminal justice system, criminal record discrimination has an enormous disparate impact on black households. **Black people make up 32 percent of the state’s population, yet they make up nearly 71 percent of the state’s jail and prison population.** HB 1073 addresses this harm by ensuring that those who have already been discriminated against do not become homeless after release because of institutional racism in the criminal justice system.

HB 1073 limits a landlord’s review of an applicant’s criminal record. At the initial rental application, a landlord may only screen and deny a tenant for convictions that are sexual in nature, first- and second-degree murder, and enrollment of a sex registry. With the exception of these convictions, a landlord must first evaluate a tenant in all other acceptance criteria (employment, income verification, references, etc). If the tenant qualifies under these criteria, the landlord must make a conditional offer of tenancy before performing a background check. The landlord may not consider certain criminal records within a three-year lookback period. The landlord is still allowed the option to withdraw the conditional offer based on serious convictions that pose a substantial risk to housing safety, as well as being registered on the sexual registration list. If an applicant is denied based on one of these convictions, the tenant can still provide mitigating evidence in hopes the landlord

<sup>1</sup> Daniel K. Malone, “Assessing Criminal History as a Predictor of Future Housing Success for Homeless Adults with Behavioral Health Disorders,” *Psychiatric Services* 60, no. 2 (2009), 224–230, 227–229, <https://perma.cc/8ASPC98U>. See also Calvin Johnson, “Tenant Screening with Criminal Background Checks: Predictions and Perceptions Are Not Causality,” *Edge*: Office of Policy Development and Research, May 17, 2022, <https://perma.cc/ZX8E-M4Y8>; Lucius Couloute, *Nowhere to Go: Homelessness Among Formerly Incarcerated People* (Northampton, MA: Prison Policy Initiative, 2018), <https://perma.cc/T7R7-JEUB>


<sup>2</sup> Bushway, Shawn D., *Resetting the Record: The Facts on Hiring People with Criminal Histories*. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2024.



may reconsider the denial. This balances the prospective tenant's need for fair housing with the landlord's ability to screen for certain potentially relevant risks related to criminal history.

Many states, Washington D.C., as well as Prince Georges and Montgomery Counties have passed Fair Chance Ordinances that are similar to HB 1073. A number of these jurisdictions have reported success after implementation without negative impacts to community safety or adverse incidents to landlord properties. Passing HB 1073 Fair Chance is a step in the right direction for all Marylanders. **Kizuna urges a favorable report on HB 1073**

**Thank you,**

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Megan Goddard

CEO & Co-Founder, Kizuna

megan@kizuna.solutions