

TESTIMONY:

In Favor of Maryland Fair Chance Housing Bill

Good evening, and thank you for the opportunity to speak today.

My name is Ramioka Robinson. I am here not just as an advocate, and not just as a professional working in reentry and education — but as a formerly incarcerated woman whose life was put at risk because I could not access safe housing.

I served my sentence —but my punishment did not end when I was released.

As a native Washington, D.C., I was released into Baltimore with no family and no housing. Because of my record, housing options were closed off entirely.

Even though I had been released, I still felt trapped —this time by policy, stigma, and systemic barriers.

With nowhere else to go, I moved in with a former partner, and that situation became abusive. If Fair Chance Housing had been in place, I would have had a real chance to choose safety instead of survival.

Fair Chance Housing is not a reward or a handout—it is the foundation of safety.

Maslow's hierarchy of needs teaches us that before growth or stability, people must first have safety.

Without securing safe housing first, employment, education, recovery, and compliance all become unstable.

How can we expect people to rebuild their lives why simultaneously denying them the foundation needed to do so?

When housing is denied based solely on a record, it pushes people toward harm, homelessness, or survival choices that undermine public safety.

That is not rehabilitation —it is a continuation of punishment.

Today, I stand before you as someone who survived —and someone who works every day to make reentry safer for others.

I strongly urge you to pass the Fair Chance Housing Act so that release in Maryland means safety, dignity, and a real opportunity to succeed.

Thank you for your time and consideration.