

RE: Maryland Fair Chance Housing Act
HB 1073
SB 937

Good afternoon, Chair, Ranking Member, and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

My name is Waunita Scott. I have been a housing provider in Baltimore City since 2023, and I am the founder of Mavrik Village, a low-barrier, community-based housing model serving returning citizens. I am here in strong support of the Maryland Fair Chance Housing Act (HB 1073/SB 937).

I have housed tenants with and without criminal records, and I can say clearly: people with records are no different than any other tenants. In my experience, they are not dangerous, they pay their rent on time, and they do not disturb the community. What they face are automatic denials that ignore who they are today and the progress they've made.

I have worked with justice-impacted individuals for over 25 years in community settings, public education, and corrections. In 2024, while exploring opening a halfway house and having used the traditional high-barrier screening process for rentals, I saw firsthand how difficult it is for someone with a record to secure housing, no matter how stable or qualified they are. I had a vacant two-bedroom apartment, furnished it, and decided to start with what I had. That decision evolved into Mavrik Village.

What I have seen since then is simple: when people have stable housing, they work, they reconnect with their families, and they rebuild their lives. Housing is not a reward—it is the foundation for public safety and successful reentry.

This bill is not burdensome for landlords. A conditional offer followed by a background check is a reasonable, structured process. It preserves the landlord's discretion while ensuring applicants are evaluated individually rather than automatically denied.

The Maryland Fair Chance Housing Act is a balanced, practical step toward safer communities and stronger families. I respectfully urge a favorable report. Thank you for your time and consideration.