

DATE: March 11, 2026

BILL NO: Senate Bill 937

TITLE: Landlord and Tenant - Residential Leases - Prospective Tenant Criminal History Records Check (Maryland Fair Chance Housing Act)

COMMITTEE: Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

Letter of Support

Description of Bill:

Senate Bill 937 establishes standards on how landlords may use criminal history information when evaluating prospective tenants. The bill prohibits landlords from requesting or considering most criminal history information before making an offer, with some exceptions with certain more serious offenses. Following a conditional offer, landlords may consider only specified convictions and conduct an assessment that allows applicants to provide evidence of rehabilitation, inaccuracies, or other mitigating circumstances. Additionally, the bill restricts discriminatory advertising, increases transparency in tenant screening process, and directs the Department of Housing and Community Development's Office of Tenant and Landlord Affairs to develop guidance materials, collect data and enforce compliance.

Background and Analysis:

There has been a substantial amount of research demonstrating a strong correlation between access to stable housing and reduced crime rates. Individuals returning to communities after involvement with crime often face significant barriers to securing housing, which can increase housing instability and negatively affect successful reentry outcomes. Since individuals with criminal records are subjected to screening barriers, these housing barriers contribute to unequal access to stable housing opportunities. Furthermore in 2020, the [Marshall Project](#) found that incarcerated individuals stated affordable housing and living wages as the primary factor that would prevent their return to prison. The countless cycle of housing uncertainty continues to create ongoing vulnerability for these communities.

SB 937 seeks to reduce these unnecessary housing barriers while maintaining landlord discretion through assessments. By promoting fair and transparent screening practices, the bill supports the broader effort in reducing homelessness across Maryland.

DHCD Position

The Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development respectfully requests a **favorable** report on SB 937.