

I am writing to voice my strong opposition to HB 5242.

This proposed legislation will basically establish a protected class for convicted criminals, making it discriminatory for housing providers to reject applicants for certain criminal histories. Considering that the Clean Slate Law only recently went into effect in January 2024, we have not had sufficient time to gather data on its impact to the housing industry. The potential consequences are concerning. Jurisdictions like D.C. that have enacted similar measures have seen large rent increases since 2016. Moreover, HB 5242 is likely to drive up insurance premiums, already at unsustainable levels, further aggravating our housing affordability crisis. I also would urge you to consider the rights of those families, especially with young children, who live in our communities that have rented apartments from us without the knowledge that we are now forced to ignore another applicant's past criminal actions, that may have been violent, predatory or generally dangerous in nature.

Rather than imposing restrictions on the private sector, I urge you to allocate funding for transitional and supportive housing programs for individuals reintegrating into society. HB 5242 fails to address our housing supply crisis and does not contribute to resolving the 90,000- apartment unit deficit. I encourage you to focus on streamlining the permitting process for multifamily development, making it more efficient. Additionally, consider implementing tax incentives, drawing inspiration from Florida's successful "Live Local Act," to spur the construction of more affordable housing developments.

Let us collectively work towards creating a solution that prioritizes public safety while simultaneously addressing the pressing need for increased housing availability.