Legislative Testimony

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**Sample Legislator Email Supporting House Bill 5242, An Act Concerning the Collateral Consequences of a Criminal Record on Housing Opportunities**

It is important to contact your local legislators and encourage them to support our bill on the collateral consequences of a criminal record and its harms to housing opportunities.

1. Look up your local senator and legislator through the Connecticut General Assembly website. [Click here](https://www.cga.ct.gov/asp/menu/cgafindleg.asp) to access the search.
   * This page will also show federal legislators. Our bill is in the state legislature, so only contact your state senator and representative.
   * Click on each legislator’s page to view their contact information.
2. Below is an email template that you can use to encourage support of our bill:

Dear Senator/Representative [insert name here],

My name is \_\_\_\_, and I am your constituent living in [town]. I am writing to urge you to support House Bill 5242, An Act Concerning Collateral Consequences of a Criminal Record and Housing Opportunities.

1: Explain why your values align with supporting housing access for people who have been involved in our criminal legal system. Some suggested statements:

* Housing is a human right: everyone should have access to safe, affordable housing.
* I believe in a society where all people, including those who have been convicted or accused of a crime, have equal opportunity to contribute to society and build successful and fulfilling lives.

2: Facts and data supporting housing access: Feel free to reference the fact sheet and information in our toolkit or use some of the information below:

* In Connecticut, residents with a criminal record face over 550 legal barriers to meeting their basic needs, like access to housing, making it more difficult to reintegrate into society and support themselves and their families.[[1]](#footnote-1)
* People of color are disproportionately incarcerated, they also disproportionately face barriers ranging from background checks as part of rental and public housing applications, exclusion from fair housing law protections, eviction and housing forfeiture, and denial of rental or sale.
* *79 percent* of formerly incarcerated people have been denied housing due to a criminal conviction, and they are *10 to 13 times more likely* to experience homelessness than people who have not been incarcerated.[[2]](#footnote-2)

3: Conclude and ask your legislator to support the bill:

* As your constituent, I am asking for you to support House Bill 5242, An Act Concerning the Collateral Consequences of a Criminal Record and Housing Opportunities. Thank you very much!

1. National Inventory of Collateral Consequences of Conviction, <https://niccc.csgjusticecenter.org/database/results/?jurisdiction=260&consequence_category=&narrow_category=&triggering_offense_category=&consequence_type=&duration_category=&page_number=1>; *see also* Kelan Lyons, *Council Begins Study of Discrimination Against People with Criminal Records*, CT Mirror (Aug. 22, 2019), <https://ctmirror.org/2019/08/22/council-begins-study-of-discrimination-against-people-with-criminal-records/>. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. *Who Pays? The True Cost of Incarceration on Families*, Forward Together & Ella Baker Ctr. Hum. Rts (Sept. 2015),<https://forwardtogether.org/tools/who-pays/>; Lucius Couloute, *Nowhere to Go: Homelessness Among Formerly Incarcerated People*, Prison Pol’y Initiative (Aug. 2018),<https://www.prisonpolicy.org/reports/housing.html>; *Five Charts That Explain the Homelessness-Jail Cycle—And How to Break It*, Urban Inst. (Sept. 16, 2020),<https://www.urban.org/features/five-charts-explain-homelessness-jail-cycle-and-how-break-it>. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)