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House Bill 5242, An Act Concerning Collateral Consequences of Criminal Records on Housing

Good afternoon, Senator Moore, Representative Luxenberg, Ranking Members Sampson and Scott, and members of the Housing Committee.

It's been a long day, and you've heard a lot of testimony, much redundant, and necessarily so. As the second to last to testify, I'll keep it brief, and to the point.

I'm Abraham Santiago, a Smart Justice Leader with the ACLU of CT speaking today in support of House Bill 5242.

Simply stated, this is human rights legislation. Shouldn't every citizen have access to safe, stable and affordable housing?

This bill, not unlike similar laws passed across the nation, will help to eliminate barriers to housing for Connecticut residents with a criminal record. These are people who already face hundreds of legal barriers to meet basic needs, making it difficult AT BEST to reintegrate into society and support themselves and their families.

As a society, we should focus on policies that help to rehabilitate and reintegrate people, not create barriers. Making it nearly impossible to access stable housing perpetuates recidivism, hindering the very rehabilitation we should strive for. By providing housing opportunities we contribute to a more equitable and just society, allowing individuals to rebuild their lives.

I've buried the lead here maybe but as elected officials you need to know that CT voters have spoken on this matter! 74% of **YOUR CONSTITUENTS, CT VOTERS** support this bill.

82% agreed that "people who have been convicted of a crime can turn their lives around and become productive members of our community if they can get the right kind of help." This **strong voter support** crosses party lines: 92% of Democrats, 80% of Independents and **71% of Republicans are in support.**

Your constituents have spoken. The legislature must pass House Bill 5242 to eliminate barriers to housing for people living with a criminal record.