



Legislative Testimony
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Sample Testimony Supporting House Bill 5242, An Act Concerning the Collateral Consequences of a Criminal Record on Housing Opportunities

Good day Senator Moore, Representative Felipe, Ranking Members Senator Sampson, Representative Scott and to all the members of the Housing Committee:

My name is Leslie Caraballo, a proud resident in the city of Bridgeport, CT, a mother, a Smart Justice Leader with the ACLU of Connecticut, and an advocate for justice impacted youth and families. I am here in support of HB 5242, An Act Concerning the Collateral Consequences of Criminal Records on Housing Opportunities.

As a single mother housing has become the most significant obstacle in ensuring that my child is raised in a good environment and gets the best education she deserves, something that should be easy for me – however, it is not. As a formerly incarcerated individual who was released in 2017 to a transitional facility, I managed to secure a good job and get promotions to where I now work from home and have been living at the same address since then. I have been trying to move to an area that would be better and safer for my daughter than the neighborhood where I can't allow her to play freely outside without worrying if she would be caught in the crossfire of something happening on the streets, but the places I have applied to have denied me due to my criminal background. I have always paid my rent on time, I have never been evicted or done anything that would cause any landlord to not give me an opportunity as a tenant, my income is not an issue, yet I am being punished, penalized and rejected for my past.

Why am I not worthy of better, and more importantly why is my child not worthy of living in a good area? When I am rejected due to a background check, that in turn robs my daughter of a bright future in a good environment. I believe in a society where all people, including those who have been convicted or accused of a crime to have equal opportunity to contribute to society and build successful and fulfilling lives. Here in my hand, I hold proof of landlords and agencies who have no problem basically stating that they conduct background checks and those with criminal records will not be considered. Stable housing is the base of ensuring successful reentry, yet our state makes it very difficult for people to actually obtain housing by constructing numerous collateral consequences related to housing.

I conclude by saying this: for the sake of parents such as myself and those affected by this, I am asking for the committee to support HB 5242 because my past should not dictate my child's future. I believe that each and every one of you who can see my beautiful four-year-old daughter would agree and be a part of passing a bill that is just, right and supports everyone's right to housing.