



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

Hello Senator Moore, Representative Felipe, Ranking Members Senator Sampson, Representative Scott, and distinguished members of the Housing Committee:

My name is Manuel Sandoval, I live in New Britain, I am a Licensed Clinical Social Worker and a Leader with ACLU Smart Justice Campaign. I am testifying in support of House Bill 5242, An Act Concerning The Collateral Consequences Of Criminal Records On Housing Opportunities.

Why must those of us who have paid our debts to society continue to beg for basic rights such as housing and employment? Are we to be forever relegated to the margins of society, deemed unworthy and undeserving of equal opportunities? The ethos of "do the crime, do the time" should not be synonymous with a lifetime of disenfranchisement and destitution.

A judge's sentence encompasses the offense, the term of incarceration, and the state's prescribed punishment—nothing more. When a person has completed their sentence, they have earned the right to be able to move on with their life. Yet, why do we find ourselves repeatedly advocating for the most basic of human needs, such as housing and employment, during each legislative session? Where is the justice in this ongoing struggle for dignity and inclusion? When will the damnation into exile ever end?

As an individual who has undergone personal transformation, dedicated myself to education, community upliftment, and civic engagement, I am deeply troubled by the persistent use of discrimination, redlining, and exclusionary practices

that continue to disenfranchise and oppress people of color. These systemic injustices not only undermine our fundamental human rights to safe, affordable housing but also perpetuate cycles of poverty and social inequality. I implore the members of this committee to reflect on our history marred by institutional discrimination and exclusionary tactics. From the Indian Removal Act of 1830, the Black Codes during Reconstruction, the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, the internment of Japanese Americans during World War II, and the ignoble era of Jim Crow Laws, which entrenched racial segregation and promoted white supremacy, our nation's past is fraught with injustices perpetrated against marginalized communities.

It is imperative that we shift our paradigm and embrace a more humane approach. Housing is not a privilege but a fundamental human right essential for fostering social equity, economic stability, and overall well-being within our communities. House Bill 5242 represents a pivotal step towards dismantling the barriers that impede the reintegration of formerly incarcerated individuals into society.

We must divest from harmful and costly institutions and invest in robust, community-based solutions that provide comprehensive support to those who have paid their debts to society. I urge you, esteemed members of the committee, to lend your support to House Bill 5242 and stand on the right side of history.

Thank you for your time, attention, and consideration of these critical matters.

Respectfully,

Manuel Sandoval