



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, and all the other distinguished members of the Housing Committee:

My name is Terri Ricks, I am a resident of Hartford and a Smart Justice Leader with the ACLU of Connecticut. I am a person who has been directly impacted by homelessness due to housing challenges. I am an individual who is here speaking and fighting for change while living for the last three-and-a-half years in a hotel due to housing challenges. Every day has been a fight, but nothing has been a fight as tough as being free from prison in 2005, and after completing changing my life, housing still eludes me to this day. So today I am here strongly asking for your support for HB 5242, An Act Concerning the Collateral Consequences of Criminal Records on Housing Opportunities.

One of the most challenging and hurtful obstacles that people face is housing discrimination. No matter how many years have gone by, no matter how qualified a person may be, no matter how good their credit score is, no matter that they've always paid their rent, finding housing is still an obstacle. This makes folks who have rebuilt their lives feel that the door continues to be slammed in their faces. Giving an opportunity to people who have done their time and paid their debt to society is and should be a right, not the luck of the draw. The opportunity is not the risky proposition that some would have you believe. The risk falls within not allowing people to have a second opportunity at integration back into their communities. That begins with helping individuals find safe and secure housing. I've been in a fight for

survival, but it's not about me. I'm in this fight to save lives. HB 5242 has been a fight for survival for each and everyone affected by the collateral consequences of living with a criminal record. So once again, I respectfully ask and urge the members of the Housing Committee to support HB 5242.

Thank you for listening to my testimony and I welcome any questions you may have.