

Speaker Corey Johnson
New York City Council
City Hall Office
New York, NY 10007

Speaker Corey Johnson and the New York City Council:

We collectively call on you to immediately pass the [Fair Chance for Housing Act, Intro 2047-2020](#), to end housing discrimination against people with convictions.

As you know, New York City is in the midst of a homelessness crisis. There are thousands of people stuck in the shelter system who have the means to get housing, but have been denied over and over again because they have convictions in their past.

We are also in the midst of a pandemic; there are [14,000 New York City families](#) who've had pending warrants of evictions against them since the start of the eviction moratorium, and hundreds of thousands more who will be at risk of eviction when the moratorium ends. When they go to apply for new housing, the thousands of New Yorkers with conviction records will have one more obstacle stacked against them: a background check.

Criminal background checks have been used for far too long to exclude people from housing. **A conviction has an end date, shouldn't the punishment?**

We know that our criminal legal system is fundamentally racist and flawed. **You cannot untangle the racism of the criminal legal system from the records that come from that system.** As a result, what a background check really tells you is the race of a person and whether they grew up in a neighborhood where there was heavy investment in law enforcement. We can never put an end to our neighborhoods' racial disparities or commit fully to fair housing without eliminating background checks.

Housing is a human right. Housing denials based on conviction records impact whole families. Nearly half of all children in the United States—[about 33 million to 36.5 million](#)—have at least one parent with a criminal record. This bill is one step toward ending the perpetual punishment of the criminal legal system and intergenerational cycles of homelessness. Further, **this bill will increase access to housing with no cost to the City**. In fact, it will likely reduce costs by removing barriers to housing and reducing the use of shelters.

The cycle of homelessness and incarceration is well-known and well-documented. **The ability to have a stable life starts with having stable housing** — and research shows that access to housing reduces recidivism. This legislation will end discrimination in housing, keep families together, and build strong communities. The de Blasio Administration and Human Rights Commission are in full support of this Act. **The City Council must act immediately to pass the Fair Chance for Housing Act, Intro 2047-2020.**

Sincerely,

Organizations:

1. A Little Piece Of Light
2. The Ali Forney Center
3. Alliance of Families for Justice
4. Breaking the Chains of Your Mind
5. Brennan Center for Justice at NYU School of Law
6. BronxConnect / ManhattanConnect
7. The Bronx Defenders
8. Brooklyn Defender Services
9. Catholic Migration Services
10. Center for Alternative Sentencing & Employment Services (CASES)
11. Center for Community Alternatives
12. Center for Court Innovation
13. Center for Employment Opportunities
14. Children's Defense Fund-NY
15. Coalition for Homeless Youth
16. Coalition for the Homeless
17. Coalition of Reentry Advocates (CoRA)
18. College and Community Fellowship
19. Common Justice
20. Community Service Society
21. Corporation for Supportive Housing
22. Correctional Association of New York
23. Covenant House New York
24. CUNY Law Housing Rights Project
25. Doing Good Business Well
26. Enterprise Community Partners
27. Exodus Transitional Community
28. Fair Chance for Housing Campaign

29. Fair Housing Justice Center
30. The Fortune Society
31. Freedom Agenda, Urban Justice Center
32. GOSO - Getting Out Staying Out
33. Hour Children
34. Housing Court Answers
35. HousingPlus
36. Housing Works
37. Hudson Link for Higher Education in Prison
38. Incarcerated Nation Network
39. Interfaith Assembly on Homelessness and Housing
40. John Jay College Institute for Justice & Opportunity
41. JustLeadershipUSA
42. Katal Center for Equity, Health, and Justice
43. Legal Action Center
44. Legal Aid Society
45. Make the Road NY
46. Mental Health Project, Urban Justice Center
47. Mobilization for Justice
48. Neighbors Together
49. Neighborhood Defender Service of Harlem
50. New York State Coalition Against Sexual Assault
51. New York County Defender Services
52. The New York Reentry Education Network (NYREN)
53. New York State Coalition Against Sexual Assault
54. Osborne Association
55. Parole Preparation Project
56. Peer Network Of New York
57. Police Reform Organizing Project
58. Providence House, Inc.
59. Rebuilding Independence My Style

60. Release Aging People in Prison Campaign
61. RiseBoro Community Partnership & LEAP
62. Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights
63. Safety Net Project, Urban Justice Center
64. Second Chance Firm
65. Social Work Department of Lehman College
66. St. Ann's Corner of Harm Reduction
67. Students for Sensible Drug Policy
68. The Sylvia Rivera Law Project
69. Treatment Action Group
70. Visionary V
71. VOCAL-NY
72. WESPAC Foundation, Inc.
73. Women & Justice Project
74. Women's Community Justice Association
75. Women's Prison Association
76. Youth Justice Network
77. Youth Represent

Individuals:

1. Alvaro Tadeo
2. Amy Ellenbogen
3. Amy Wald
4. Andry Henriquez
5. Anna Luft
6. Anna Pascente
7. Anne Kelsey
8. Annamaria Pascente
9. Antoinette Smidth
10. Ashish Prashar
11. Ashley Ortiz

12. Carl Mazza
13. Catherine Barreda
14. Christopher Helwig
15. Claire Wang
16. Colby Williams
17. Danielle Whyte
18. Darren Mack
19. David Perez
20. David Vasquez
21. Deepa Singh
22. Devone Nash
23. Dora Griszell
24. Edie Di Mauro
25. Eli Northrup
26. Emma Goodman
27. Erin Dowding
28. Estephania Paredes
29. Ethan Chiel
30. Frances Geteles-Shapiro
31. Gillian Stoddard Leatherberry
32. Glen Forster
33. Hallil Tabar
34. Hilton N Webb Jr.
35. Janel Callon
36. Jessica M. Kahn
37. Jennifer Montano
38. Jordyn Rosenthal
39. Joy Greenberg
40. Katie Beiter
41. Kendall Shepard
42. Lalita Brockington

43. Len Greco
44. Linda Nicholas
45. Linda Salzer
46. Lisa Rose
47. Lorie Goshin
48. Mamou Doumbia
49. Marlee Miller
50. Mary Rinaldi
51. Matalie Whittick
52. Meg Harper
53. Melissa Jones
54. Melissa Pierson
55. Melissa Taylor
56. Michael Hodge
57. Mike Litrownik
58. Min, Dr. Victoria A. Phillips - Ms. V
59. Molly Rugg
60. M.S. Wise
61. Myda El-Maghrabi
62. Nadine Brown
63. Nancy Umana-Melendez
64. Nicole Hamilton
65. Reina Matsuura
66. Roberta Todd
67. Ronald Davidson
68. Ruth McDaniels
69. Sheri Cruz
70. Siya Hegde
71. Sophia Vindeni
72. Sr. Diana G. White
73. Stacy Burnett

74. Stephen Harris
75. Tabber Benedict
76. Tommasina Faratro
77. Victor M Herrera
78. William Botchway
79. Winston Tokuhisa
80. Zoë Johnson