



H. 4071

An Act Securing Housing Options for Eligible Tenants with a History of Criminal Justice Involvement

WHAT IT WILL DO

- **Develop a department that will assist currently incarcerated people with housing access post-release, including counseling, application support, and financial assistance or housing vouchers, utilizing feedback from directly affected individuals to make adjustments to the role of the department**
- **Expand grant funding to housing development that prioritizes housing formerly incarcerated people and people in pre-release**
- **Amend Ch. 40B to incentivize development of housing that prioritizes housing formerly incarcerated people and people in pre-release through tax incentives and zoning law exceptions**
- **Give people recently released from a correctional facility priority status in affordable housing applications**
- **Allocate funds to organizations who are led by directly affected individuals that provide reentry housing opportunities**

*Formerly incarcerated people are **10x** more likely to be homeless than the general population.*

WHY IT MATTERS

- **The transition from prison to the community is rife with challenges. But before formerly incarcerated people can address health problems, find stable jobs, or learn new skills, they need a place to live.**
- **Given that many justice-involved people come from low-income communities, are expected to pay many fees during and post-incarceration, cannot earn significant income during their incarceration, and are discriminated against in employment post-incarceration, access to affordable housing is often necessary in order to be and remain stably housed.**
- **Lack of stable housing leads to further justice involvement and incarceration.**
- **Homelessness is criminalized in numerous jurisdictions, as people experiencing homelessness are disproportionately at risk of arrest, and as policing is sometimes the primary resource a jurisdiction deploys to address homelessness.**

"The City of Boston is being forced to confront the culmination of decades of ignoring the needs of the most marginalized in the community, using punitive instead of transformative solutions, allowing stigma to influence decisions related to housing and supportive programs, and restricting instead of expanding affordable housing options.

If we want to decrease homelessness, we must provide housing for people with carceral histories.

If we want fewer children permanently in foster care, we must provide housing for people with carceral histories.

If we want to decrease crime, we must provide housing for people with carceral histories.

If we want to increase public safety, we must provide housing for people with carceral histories.

If we want to increase the well-being of all of the residents of the Commonwealth, we must provide housing for people with carceral histories."

- Riley Smith, Organizer,
Justice 4 Housing



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MYTH

"Landlords will no longer be able to be selective about their prospective tenants!"

FACT

Landlords will still have the opportunity to judge all applicants on the merits of their individual applications.

MYTH

"Prioritizing formerly incarcerated people will deprioritize other people in need."

FACT

This law adds formerly incarcerated people and people in pre-release to a list of other prioritized communities. Members of this community will not replace other prioritized communities. Additionally, due to legalized discrimination against people with criminal records, this community is generally deprioritized in affordable housing opportunities to begin with.

MYTH

"This law will make neighborhoods unsafe."

FACT

Laws have been passed in multiple cities around the country to challenge housing barriers for justice involved households. Additionally, pilot programs providing vouchers to formerly incarcerated people are finding success. Although these laws are relatively new, there aren't reports that the laws have led to an increase in crime or problems in buildings.

MYTH

"Access to housing will have no influence on someone's likelihood of engaging in criminal activity."

FACT

Research shows that formerly incarcerated people with access to stable housing are less likely to commit a crime. In a pilot program in Ohio, giving supportive housing to people with disabilities upon reentry led to a 40% drop in recidivism.

Sources

"Supportive Housing for Returning Prisoners: Outcomes and Impacts of the Returning Home-Ohio Pilot Project", <https://www.urban.org/research/publication/supportive-housing-returning-prisoners-outcomes-and-impacts-returning-home-ohio-pilot-project>

"Can Housing Interventions Reduce Incarceration and Recidivism?", <https://housingmatters.urban.org/articles/can-housing-interventions-reduce-incarceration-and-recidivism>

"Vera Institute of Justice Seeks Proposals from PHAs to Help Them Implement Reentry Programs", <https://nlihc.org/resource/vera-institute-justice-seeks-proposals-phas-help-them-implement-reentry-programs>

"Local Anti-Discrimination Reentry Policies", <https://www.nhlp.org/initiatives/housing-opportunities-for-people-reentering/lifetime-registered-sex-offenders/>

"Criminalization of Homelessness", https://nlihc.org/sites/default/files/AG-2021/06-08_Criminalization-of-Homelessness.pdf

"Nowhere to Go: Homelessness among formerly incarcerated people", <https://www.prisonpolicy.org/reports/housing.html>

