

June 2021

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

Speaker Corey Johnson and the New York City Council:

As New York City faith leaders, we implore you to immediately pass the [Fair Chance for Housing Act, Intro 2047-2020](#), to end housing discrimination against people with convictions.

Housing is a human right. [Fifteen to twenty thousand New Yorkers](#) are caught each year in the cycle of homelessness and incarceration. We are committed to setting up New Yorkers to heal and move forward with their lives - but we cannot achieve this goal unless the City acts to end landlord discrimination.

Housing discrimination harms individuals, families, and entire communities. When an individual is denied an apartment, a whole family is denied a home. Housing discrimination based on an individual's conviction records not only perpetuates homelessness, it also undermines the opportunity for mobility and [success for families across generations](#).

Landlords often do background checks under the guise of "safety," but there is no world in which forcing people into homelessness makes our communities safer. Ultimately, an inability to meet economic needs [is a key driver of violence](#). **Increasing access to housing makes us all safer.**

This is clearly a moral issue, but this is also a racial justice issue. [Three-quarters](#) of New York State's formerly imprisoned population are Black or Latinx people. That means that the vast majority of individuals denied housing are people of color. Even though race-based discrimination is illegal, landlords have another way of exiling our communities of color through background checks.

There is a moral imperative to ensure that every New Yorker has a home. Denying a person access to housing because of their past is unconscionable. We ask you to take action now to right this wrong and immediately pass the Fair Chance for Housing Act.

Sincerely,

1. Astoria First Presbyterian Church
2. Bishop Kevin McKoy
3. Bishop Raymond Rivera
4. Christ Church Riverdale Social Justice Ministry

5. Church of the Ascension
6. City Voices
7. Congregation Beit Simchat Torah
8. Donna Hylton
9. Ecclesia Ministries of New York
10. Episcopal Diocese of Long Island
11. Faith in New York
12. Faith Communities for Just Reentry
13. First Presbyterian Church of Brooklyn
14. The First Presbyterian Church in the City of New York
15. Fourth Universalist Society in the City of New York
16. FPWA
17. George Tulloch
18. George Rivera
19. Gertrude Hamilton
20. Greater New York Labor-Religion Coalition
21. Gretchen Dumler
22. Imam Khabir John McGeehan
23. Interfaith Assembly on Homelessness and Housing
24. The Interfaith Center of New York
25. International Sufi School
26. Ivan Braun
27. James Litkett
28. James Welby
29. Jane Thompson
30. Jews for Racial & Economic Justice
31. Marianne Montero
32. Marilyn Reyes
33. Mary Ellen O'Boyle, SC
34. Middle Collegiate Church
35. Miguel Escobar

36. Movin' On Dream Initiative Inc.
37. Nancy Umana-Melendez
38. New York Society for Ethical Culture
39. New York State Council of Churches
40. Pastor Zac Martin
41. Pia Kistner
42. Rabbi Barat Ellman
43. Rabbi Hilly Haber, Central Synagogue
44. Rabbi Lauren Grabelle Herrmann
45. Rabbi Joshua Stanton
46. Rev. Amanda Hambrick Ashcraft
47. Rev. David W. Dyson
48. Rev. Dr. Robert Brashear
49. Rev. Sharon White-Harrigan
50. The Rev. Dr. Anna Pearson
51. The Rev. Jone Johnson Lewis
52. The Rt. Rev. Lawrence C. Provenzano
53. Ruth McDaniels
54. Sandy Figueroa
55. Shalom United Missions Intl. Inc.
56. Sisters of Charity PJIC Office
57. Steven Paulikas
58. Susan Anderson-Smith
59. Trellis and Recovery House of Worship Brooklyn
60. Trinity Church Wall Street
61. Visionary V