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## **“Housing as a Human Right Bill” To Potentially Impact Millions of Illinoisans**

Governor Pritzker Signs Groundbreaking Bill Making the Denial of Housing Due to Certain Records a Human Rights Violation

Sept. 24, 2019 – Chicago — Governor J. B. Pritzker recently signed the Housing as a Human Right Bill (SB1780), which makes it a civil rights violation to use arrest, juvenile, sealed or expunged records during real estate transactions.

Before this bill, landlords in Illinois were able to refuse to rent to prospective tenants solely based on a record of arrest – even if the tenant had never even been convicted of a crime. As a result, thousands of individuals and families were denied the ability to find safe, stable, and affordable housing in their community.

In Illinois, nearly five million adults, or about half of the state’s population, are estimated to have an arrest or conviction record, which act as substantial barriers to work, housing, and well-being. These records can also be for minor public order offenses or may even be decades old. While there is still a need to address many remaining barriers for these individuals, the passing of SB1780 protects Illinois home buyers and renters from being denied housing due to a record.

“This bill is a step in the right direction in ensuring that people with criminal records can obtain housing, which is so critical when re-entering society,” said Quintin Williams, Heartland Alliance Field Building Manager. “Heartland Alliance and our partners will continue to push for change that brings Illinois closer to becoming a more equitable state for ALL of its residents.”

The new law, sponsored by Representative Curtis Tarver (D-25<sup>th</sup>) and Senator Omar Aquino (D-2<sup>nd</sup>) and led by the Restoring Rights and Opportunities Coalition of Illinois (RROCI), will help thousands of Illinois residents find safer and more stable housing across the state. This in turn will help individuals and families protect their rights, while decreasing recidivism and strengthening communities

“Stable housing is a basic human need that is far too challenging for many people in our state,” said Representative Tarver. “I am proud that this new law helps to reduce the barriers for individuals with records, so that they may find the housing they need to succeed.”

The Housing as a Human Right Bill will go into effect on January 1, 2020 and if individuals believe that they have been denied housing due to their record, they can file a complaint with the [Illinois Department of Human Rights](#).

Heartland Alliance, as a member of RROCI, worked alongside coalition members Cabrini Green Legal Aid, the Chicago Coalition for the Homeless, and Community Renewal Society to advocate for this bill during the 2019 Illinois Legislative Session.

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[The Restoring Rights and Opportunities Coalition of Illinois](#) (RROCI) is a coalition led by people with criminal records, community organizers, lawyers, and policy specialists who advocate for real criminal justice reform that increases opportunities for people with records. RROCI is committed to solutions driven with a community voice and believes that Illinois needs a fair system of justice that recognizes human dignity and that everyone deserves a meaningful future.

[Heartland Alliance for Human Rights and Human Needs](#) – Heartland Alliance, one of the world’s leading anti-poverty organizations, works in communities in the U.S. and abroad to serve those who are homeless, living in poverty, or seeking safety. It provides a comprehensive array of services in the areas of health, housing, jobs and justice – and leads state and national policy efforts, which target lasting change for individuals and society.

[Chicago Coalition for the Homeless](#) – is the only nonprofit in Illinois solely dedicated to advocating with and for people experiencing homelessness. Staffed by community organizers, public policy specialists, and legal aid attorneys, CCH supports those impacted by homelessness – families, students, unaccompanied youth, low-wage workers, and people in community reentry. Through extensive outreach at shelters, schools, drop-in centers, and events, CCH connects with more than 10,000 people annually, educating them on their rights and options and engaging those interested in advocacy.

[Community Renewal Society](#)– Community Renewal Society informs and brings people of faith and congregations together, in partnership with communities, coalitions, interfaith organizations, and civic leaders, to intentionally and decisively transform society toward greater social justice at the intersection of racism and poverty. Our vision is to realize the Beloved Community envisioned by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.