



**JOINT COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY**

**TESTIMONY OF YWCA Cambridge IN SUPPORT OF  
S.192 / H.1808, An Act promoting housing opportunity and mobility  
through eviction sealing (HOMES)  
August 3rd, 2021**

Chair Eldridge, Chair Day, and members of the Joint Committee on Judiciary, my name is Tania Del Rio, and I am honored to offer this testimony on behalf of YWCA Cambridge, a non-profit organization with a mission to eliminate racism and empower women, where I am the Executive Director. We are the city of Cambridge's largest residential provider of low-income housing for women and homeless families, with a ten-unit family shelter and a 103-unit SRO residence.

**The YWCA Cambridge would like to go on the record IN SUPPORT of S.192/H.1808, An Act Promoting Housing Opportunity and Mobility Through Eviction Sealing.**

*An Act Promoting Housing Opportunity and Mobility Through Eviction Sealing, S.192/H1808* ("the HOMES act") will protect tenants from being unfairly branded with an eviction record if they don't have a judgment against them, if they weren't actually evicted or if they didn't do anything wrong. There is currently no process to seal eviction records, putting tenants with eviction records at a disproportionate disadvantage in future housing opportunities and mobility. Furthermore, if second-generation renters list a parent, caretaker, or foster parent with an eviction history as a co-signer, they are likely to be disadvantaged through no fault of their own.

The current eviction process targets our population, those that are unstably housed are being punished without respite with a permanent record. Women, people of color, and families with children are at higher risk of eviction. Black women renters in Massachusetts are 2.4 times more likely than white renters to have evictions filed against them. Black women are more likely to be denied housing from previous eviction filings.<sup>1</sup> The HOMES Act will make it illegal for a landlord or tenant screening company to use or report a sealed court record.

By passing *An Act Promoting Housing Opportunity and Mobility Through Eviction Sealing, S.192/H1808*, the Commonwealth will take greater strides in protecting its residents, particularly those that are vulnerable and unstably housed. This bill will help decrease eviction records from being a barrier to housing.

**YWCA Cambridge requests that you give a favorable report to An Act Promoting Housing Opportunity and Mobility Through Eviction Sealing, S.192/H1808.**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tania Del Rio".

Tania Del Rio  
Executive Director  
YWCA Cambridge

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<sup>1</sup> Eviction Lab. (n.d.). The eviction lab. Eviction Lab. <https://evictionlab.org/>.