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## **Ann Arbor Human Rights Commission Fair Chance Access to Housing Resolution**

**(Resolution and Proposed Ordinance were accepted unanimously by the  
Human Rights Commission on February 10, 2021)**

WHEREAS, mass incarceration is a national crisis and restoring the rights of people affected by mass incarceration is a national priority; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. Department of Justice has estimated one in every three adults in the United States has either an arrest or conviction record; and

WHEREAS, the Center for American Progress reports that nearly half of all children in the United States have at least one parent with a criminal record; and

WHEREAS, studies have found that private criminal databases pull source information from inadequate records and lack accountability procedures to ensure that the database records provided to Housing Providers are accurate. Many housing providers in conducting criminal background checks are relying on such inaccurate information in evaluating housing applications; and

WHEREAS, formerly incarcerated persons face barriers to access to both private rental and publicly subsidized affordable housing; and

WHEREAS, homelessness is a critical issue in Ann Arbor and formerly incarcerated people are disproportionately affected by homelessness, which can prevent a formerly incarcerated person from getting a job, from visiting with their children, and from fulfilling other needs that are fundamental to reintegrating with community after incarceration; and

WHEREAS, the unmet housing needs of formerly incarcerated people in Ann Arbor are an acute challenge to dignity, public health and safety, and equality; and

WHEREAS, statistical racial inequities at every stage of the criminal justice system translates into a racial disparity in access to housing; and

WHEREAS, racial bias in plea-bargaining, which accounts for the vast majority of new criminal convictions, is a significant source of the disparity in incarceration and of the felony convictions Imposed on 33% of all African American men; and

WHEREAS, African Americans account for 7% of the population in Ann Arbor, and 14% of the population in Washtenaw County, African Americans account for more than 50% of those held in the Washtenaw County jail and over 50% of those held in state prison; and

WHEREAS, studies found that "obtaining stable housing enables people to successfully re-integrate into their communities and significantly reduces recidivism rates; and

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WHEREAS, the initiative "One Community: Advancing Racial Equity in Ann Arbor & Washtenaw County" was established to focus on creating a just and equitable community for Ann Arbor City and Washtenaw County residents; and

WHEREAS, persons with criminal records have not been shown to be a source of criminal activity, property destruction, or rental housing policy violations any more than have persons without a criminal history; and

WHEREAS, the Ann Arbor Human Rights Commission has drafted an ordinance to eliminate the use of criminal history in tenant selection in order to give persons with a criminal record a fair opportunity to compete for rental housing and to be able to reside with family members and others, thus putting them in a better position to return to their communities and to obtain gainful employment. Such housing opportunities will also reduce the incidence of homelessness for persons with criminal records; therefore it is

RESOLVED, that the Ann Arbor Human Rights Commission urges the Ann Arbor City Council to adopt the Fair Chance Access to Housing Ordinance proposed by the City's Human Rights Commission.