



**MICHELLE MUSSMAN**

STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 56<sup>TH</sup> DISTRICT

09/03/2019

Dear Chairman Suffredin and Honorable Members of the Rules and Administration Committee,

I wanted to take a moment to tell you how happy I am to hear about the historic passing of the Just Housing Amendment. I am proud that Cook County is working to protect people with arrests and past convictions from housing discrimination, which will help them to achieve stability and wellness, and putting them on a pathway to self-sufficiency.

As positive as the ruling is, there is a point that is concerning and may need some clarification. There seems to be a change in what the proposed rule says are the allowable number of years to review an applicant's history. While the Chicago Housing Authority and the Housing Authority of Cook County limit a look back to the applicant's past 3 years, housing providers are allowed to consider an applicant's last 5 years. Parity in the timing may help to eliminate any confusion over the county's position and would clarify messaging. Having one set of rules for private housing and another for public housing will only create complications for both the population that needs assistance and from our housing providers and non-profit agencies working on resolutions. Anything that inhibits or complicates a person achieving the housing stability they need is certainly not helping to move the cause forward.

I am pleased that we are beginning to address some of the issues around housing people with past convictions. All evidence indicates that secure housing is the key to making any other human service support; healthcare, employment, substance abuse treatment, decreased recidivism, etc. work more effectively and will save money in the long run.

I'm hopeful that we will get to a place where applicants for housing will be assessed on their current ability to pay their rent, be a respectful tenant, and a good neighbor in their community. Everyone deserves a second chance and a place to call home.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Michelle Mussman".

State Representative Michelle Mussman D 56