

# Stop the revolving door from RE-ENTRY to HOMELESSNESS to PRISON

SB 2158 Lightford / HB 5251 Lilly

**PROBLEM** We can't have policies that force thousands of people, disproportionately Black men, into homelessness, poverty, and prison, and think these policies are working and should continue.

## Housing is the basis for stability and success, but Illinois takes it away.

### Illinois pushes housed people into homelessness.

Banishment laws render most non-rural housing "illegal." Once banished from their homes, people have nowhere else to live.

### Illinois creates housing instability for life.

The zones are always in flux. Once housed, a person can be forced out at any time—whether they rent, own, or live with family.

### People can't identify which blocks they are banished from.

Home day cares are ubiquitous and invisible. They dramatically reduce housing availability and make it impossible to search for legal housing.

## Homeless registrants face impossible laws, then get arrested for technicalities.

### Housed people register once per year.

But people who are homeless must re-register 52 times per year. It is a senseless hardship to get to police every week to fill out the same form.

### Weekly registration leads to "failure to register" charges.

Most people who register weekly do get a felony conviction for a technical violation, at some point. This may be years or decades after serving their time.

### Fee waivers for indigence are applied arbitrarily.

Even disabled people living well below poverty guidelines are denied.

## These laws drain law enforcement resources.

### Illinois police detectives conduct more than 100,000 re-registrations per year.

This burden included 70,300 re-registrations of 1,300 homeless people, most who would have a place to live if not for housing banishment laws. Police time would be better spent responding to 911 calls or investigating crime.

### IDOC pays millions just to pack people in temporary housing.

- For the past 12 years, 1,300 people/year were held in prison past their release dates, mainly due to housing banishment laws. Now a federal injunction prohibits IDOC from detaining people due to homelessness. SB2158 would solve this problem by opening up housing.
- Instead, IDOC finds landlords outside the banishment zones, and piles people on MSR (mandatory supervised release) into their buildings. But this kicks the can down the road.
- Once people are off MSR supervision, they can just be homeless again.
- Communities oppose these clusters. They cause a terrible reentry dynamic.

This bill addresses Illinois public conviction registries. The "failure to register" provision applies to people on Arson, Murder + Violent Offenses Against Youth, and Sex Offense registries. The fee waiver applies to people on Arson, Murder + Violent Offenses Against Youth, and Sex Offense registries. Weekly registration provision applies to people on Murder, Violent Offenses Against Youth, and Sex Offense registries. Housing banishment laws apply to most people listed on the Sex Offense registry.



## SOLUTION

**Open up housing.  
Let people stay in their homes.**

- Reduce housing banishment zones from 500 to 250 feet.
- Once people have stable housing, grandfather them in.
- Remove day care homes from the banishment list.

*The last provision was suggested by the recent Sergeant and Commander of the CPD Criminal Registration Unit.*

## SOLUTION

**Equity for unhoused people.**

- Repeal the extra "weekly" registration. Register people based on "duty to register," not their housing status.
- Establish standards for fee waivers based on indigence.

## SOLUTION

**Reduce IDOC/police mandates.  
Restore system functionality.**

- Make "failure to register" a misdemeanor (from a felony).
- Reduce 10-year registration time on Murder and Violent Offenses Against Youth registries to 5 years.

# ILLINOIS PUBLIC CONVICTION REGISTRIES CHURN PEOPLE INTO PRISON

Illinois now has public conviction registries for Murder, Violent Offenses Against Youth, Sex Offense, Arson, Methamphetamine Manufacturing, etc. We have astronomical rates of men on registries and alarming disparities:

- **1 in 145 men** in Illinois is listed on a public conviction registry.
- **1 in 42 Black men** in Illinois is listed on a public conviction registry.

## TESTIMONY FROM THE CHICAGO 400 ALLIANCE

I had probation. I came home and followed the rules. One day police told me my home was illegal. I had no idea. I went to jail. I was 20 years old. That was 19 years ago. Now I'm still struggling with this, still homeless. —*Terrance*

I had a job where I could learn house renovation. But it was weekdays. I had to turn it down to go register weekly. I still think about that job. Where would I be now w/ that skill? Weekly registration holds us back. —*Ben*

I had just started a new company. My wife and I went to Las Vegas to celebrate. When we got back, police said I had to move. But I couldn't find any other housing and police gave me a "failure to register." I got 7 YEARS in prison. My life was thrown off course. I still can't find housing. I sleep in my car. —*James*

I am a disabled veteran. Each year, I collect ALL the forms to show that I am indigent. The police tell you pay the fee or you get arrested. And they do arrest you. Going to police is humiliating and stressful. —*Chris*

I have anxiety when I have to go register. You wait all day. The police can't handle the numbers coming in. They treat us like we are in custody. —*Sam*

Police said a home daycare opened up. I don't even know where it was. I had to move my family somewhere stable. Now I don't live with them but I still take care of my kids. I get there at 6am, take my son to school and watch our toddler. We have another baby coming. I need to be living in the home. —*Michael*

I was living with my mom, taking care of her. Then my home "became illegal." Police gave me 30 days to move. I couldn't find nowhere else to go so I stayed. Police came out and arrested me. I went to prison. Then I had to stay in prison due to "insufficient housing." Well THAT'S Why I Went In. Then my mom died while I was locked up. It hurts to this day. I could have taken care of her. —*Noe*

I'm a great father. I put my kids to bed and then I have to park my truck somewhere to sleep. The kids started asking where I go when I leave the house. If we pass this law, I can live with my family again. —*Robert*

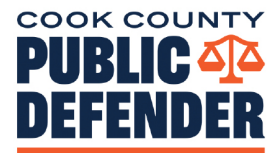
We served our time. Why do you put us in a downward spiral? —*John*

I had a house. Now I sleep the trains. But I am scared and have to stay awake. When you push us out of our homes, we are still your neighbors. —*Jay*

## CONTACT

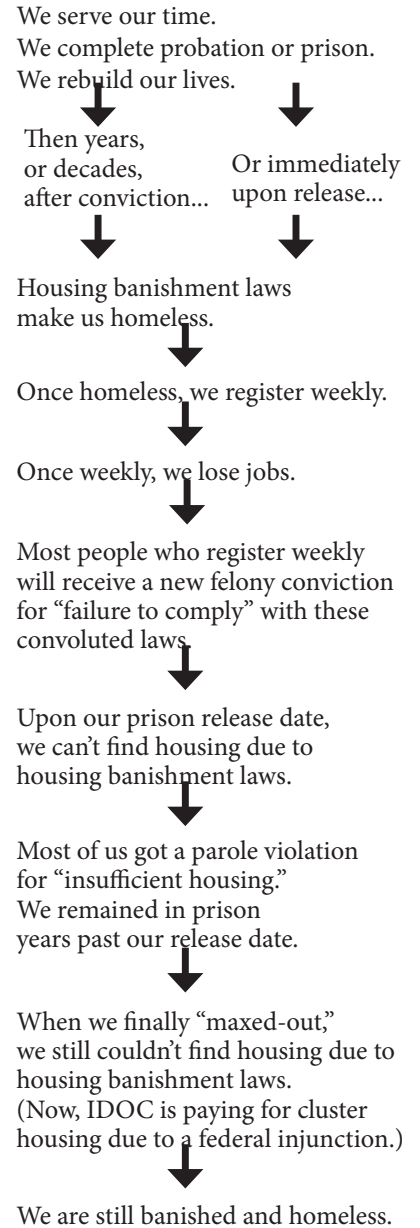
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## THE CYCLE

1. Housing banishment
2. Homelessness
3. Weekly re-registration
4. Failure to register felony
5. Prison
6. Back to homelessness.



**Looking back 10 years at Illinoisans ever required to register weekly:**

**53% received a "failure to register" felony at some point.**

**Being weekly or homeless strongly correlates to a new felony for a technical violation.**