

## **Support HF 548 - Eviction Expungement**

Please support HF 548, a bill to free thousands of lowans, including victims of domestic and sexual violence, from a lifetime of being negatively impacted by an eviction record. This bill addresses a major barrier to housing access caused by unfair tenant screening practices. These policies impact all renters but disproportionately harm women.

First, the bill protects a tenant from being punished with an eviction record if they were never evicted, i.e., it seals eviction filings if a tenant is not guilty. In about half of eviction filings in Iowa the tenant 'wins' their case and is not evicted. Yet tenant screening policies used by landlords count all filings the same – so an applicant is denied housing even if they were never evicted.

Second, the bill allows tenants who have been evicted for nonpayment of rent to petition the court to seal the record if they have had a 'clean' record (no evictions for nonpayment of rent) for five years. Survivors of domestic violence are often evicted for non-payment of rent because they cannot afford to continue paying rent for a home where they are no longer safe.

Access to affordable housing is foundational to economic security. Having an eviction record limits access to housing and that makes it harder to stay employed and keep children in school. It keeps families trapped in a cycle of economic hardship.

It is blatantly unfair to mark people for life with an eviction record if they have never been evicted. And given the immediate and direct impact of stable housing on economic security, not being able to pay rent 5 years ago should not forever limit someone's access to housing. Please support this bill offering meaningful, life-changing relief to all Iowa renters impacted by eviction filings.