



*The mission of the Wisconsin Apartment Association (WAA) is to provide education, leadership, and representation to enable rental housing providers to operate their businesses responsibly, ethically and successfully!*

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Testimony before the Legislative Council Study Committee  
on Increasing Offender Employment Opportunities  
October 21, 2022

Thank you to the members of the Legislative Council Study Committee on Increasing Offender Employment Opportunities for allowing me to speak. I have been asked to address the issue of housing for offenders from the perspective of the rental housing provider community.

I am Corina Eufinger, Chairperson of the Board of Directors of the Wisconsin Apartment Association. I'm also a real estate investor, realtor and property manager in Wisconsin.

The Wisconsin Apartment Association is made up of rental investors across the State of Wisconsin and has 19 local associations representing landlords from La Crosse to Green Bay, and Kenosha to Superior. I have listed the local associations at the end of this testimony. The Wisconsin Apartment Association believes in having equitable laws for both our property owners and their clients, the renters of Wisconsin.

We as rental investors understand that everyone needs a roof over their head. Our members work hard to help our society provide safe, clean, and equitable housing. Most rental owners across Wisconsin are considered "Mom and Pop" owners. They own just a few rentals and maintain other jobs to feed their families while hoping to create something they pass on to their children. While there are larger landlords and big

investment companies in Wisconsin, these businesses amount to a small percentage of rental property owners. We represent the most significant portion of landlords in Wisconsin, the do-it-yourselfers and the Ma's & Pa's.

The Wisconsin Apartment Association is aware that there is a large segment of our population that needs a second chance in life. Particularly those who have recently been incarcerated. As I am sure you are aware, nearly 650,000 individuals are released each year from Federal and State prisons. The need for second chances after incarceration is further signified by the fact that 95% of current inmates will be released at some point thus needing to re-enter society. Nearly one-third of our population has a criminal record, which we understand can be a barrier to finding clean, safe and continued housing.

The members of the Wisconsin Apartment Association are eager to find ways to assist these individuals in securing good housing. However, we must remember that the majority of these property owners have their own lives and financial livelihood wrapped up in their rental units. It is the Ma & Pa owners who stand to gain the most and lose the most as they oversee and maintain their properties that serve our communities. The properties that they own are their life savings and their own financial well-being is hinged on these properties.

While we understand society's need for housing for these individuals, our members are concerned about the financial and personal implications that can arise from having just one bad tenant. It takes just one tenant to cause considerable physical and financial damage to a property, putting the rental owner in a dire situation. In these instances, a security deposit does little to cover the financial damage. Some individuals with criminal records who are recently released from prison may cause both financial and other issues, which can take a heavy toll on the rental owner. Our owners are concerned about

damage to their properties, and safety for themselves and others in their buildings, as well as the community.

While our members wish to work with this committee to find the best solution to this issue, we must remember that police calls, property damage, and tenant conduct in a community are an inference toward the property owners. It is often said that reputation is currency; this is equally true for a rental owner's reputation in their community. A security deposit does not cover the landlord's reputation.

With all that said, we believe there are ways to work on these problems. We believe firmly that every issue in rental housing can strike an equitable balance between protection for the property owner and rights for those seeking housing. We look forward to working with this committee to find these solutions. We encourage exploration into relevant case management, and other means to seek the real issues confronting property owners who rent to the recently released.

Thank you for your time today and the Wisconsin Apartment Association looks forward to working with you.

Corina Eufinger  
CEO/Owner, Brio Properties Real Estate Services  
Realtor with Iron Edge Realty

#### Wisconsin Apartment Association-Affiliated Associations (October 2022)

Apartment Association of the La Crosse Area  
Apartment Association of Northeast WI  
Beloit Property Manager's Association  
Chippewa Valley Apartment Association  
Dodge County Landlord Association  
Fox Valley Apartment Association  
Fond du Lac Area Apartment Association  
Great River Apartment Association  
Janesville Area Rental Property Association  
Kenosha Landlord Association

Manitowoc County Apartment Association  
Marshfield Area Apartment Association  
St. Croix Valley Apartment Association  
Southern WI Landlords Association  
Tri-County Landlord & Property Managers  
Association  
Waukesha Area Apartment Association  
Wausau Area Apartment Association  
Winnebago Apartment Association  
WI Rapids Area Rental Property Owners Assn