



Written by [Veronika Kyrylenko](#) on June 21, 2021

## N.J. Governor Murphy Signs Bill Banning Landlords From Requesting Criminal History of Potential Tenants

During a ceremony commemorating the first state and national observance of the newly introduced national holiday, [Juneteenth](#), which marks June 19 as the “end” of slavery in the United States, New Jersey Democratic Governor Phil Murphy [signed](#) into law [a bill](#) called the “Fair Chance in Housing Act.” The bill prevents landlords from requesting a person’s criminal history on housing applications. Dozens of state and local lawmakers attended the ceremonial signing and celebrated what they called a “potential national model” for housing policy, [NorthJersey reports](#).



Murphy praised the legislation, also [known](#) as the “ban the box” bill by housing advocates, as one way to address policies that have disproportionately impacted black and minority populations in the state.

“As we commemorate Juneteenth, we must commit to both remembering the past and continuing to take action to ensure communities of color, especially black Americans, achieve the full equity they deserve,” the governor said in a [statement](#).

Under the new law, which takes effect in January, landlords are only permitted to request information on a prospective tenant’s application if they are a registered sex offender, or were convicted for making meth in federally-assisted housing.

Landlords in New Jersey can now only run a criminal background check after a conditional offer is made, and can consider offenses of the first degree within six years, second- or third-degree crimes from the previous four years, or fourth-degree offenses from within a year.

A landlord can withdraw an offer, and has to give the applicant a written explanation that includes specific reasons for the decision. When making the decision, the bill encourages a landlord to weigh the nature and severity of the offense, how old the person was when he or she committed the crime, how much time has passed, and whether the offense, if it happened again, would harm the safety of the landlord’s property or other tenants, among other factors.

If rejected, the applicant can appeal and show ways he or she has rehabilitated or any inaccuracies in the criminal record.

The office of the governor shared a [statement](#) by Eric Dobson, deputy director of the local nonprofit Fair Share Housing. He said the governor, in signing the new law, had “put New Jersey at the forefront of criminal justice reform by helping to dismantle the impacts of a criminal justice system plagued by systemic racism.”

“Every person in our state deserves a home,” Dobson added. “The Fair Chance in Housing Act sits at the intersection of housing, civil rights and criminal justice reform and will make it easier for returning



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citizens to rebuild their lives by removing discriminatory barriers to housing that drives up recidivism.” [According](#) to *NJ.com*, 30 percent of those released from prison in New Jersey are back behind bars within three years.

*NorthJersey* also [informs](#) that Colorado offers similar protections for ex-offenders, saying landlords can’t consider convictions that occurred more than five years ago, with some exceptions, such as sexual offenses, according to an analysis by the National Conference of State Legislatures. An estimated 11 cities have adopted ordinances similar to that of New Jersey since 2014, including San Francisco, Seattle, Detroit, Minneapolis, Washington, D.C., and Newark, according to the Assembly Democrats office.

Democratic lawmakers don’t see any problem with forgiving past crimes of the actual offenders, but insist white Americans should “remember the past” – namely, the atrocities of slavery for which white people living today are somehow considered responsible.

At the same time, Americans are expected to forget “inconvenient” historic facts that make any form of reparations for slavery pointless, immoral, and divisive, [according](#) to David Horowitz. For example, that 350,000 Union soldiers died to free the slaves — what would we pay their descendants? Or consider that there were 3,000 black slaveowners — should their descendants be considered the oppressors or the oppressed?

Then, if slave labor created wealth for America, it obviously created wealth for black Americans as well. Horowitz estimates the GNI (gross national income) of black America is so large, it makes the African American community the tenth most prosperous “nation” on Earth.

Also, considering there were two great waves of immigration to the United States after 1880 and then 1960 — what rationale would require Vietnamese boat people, Russian refuseniks, Iranian refugees, Jews, Mexicans, Greeks, or Hungarian, Polish, Cambodian victims of Communism and many others to participate in “white guilt” and take part in the “woke” reparations programs — such as the law just signed in New Jersey?

Finally, Americans should presumably ignore that no evidence-based attempt has been made to prove that living individuals have been adversely affected by a slave system that ended more than 150 years ago, but there is plenty of evidence that the black middle class is larger than the black underclass. Writes Horowitz, “Does its existence not suggest that economic adversity is the result of failure of individual character rather than the lingering after-effect of racial discrimination?” He also points out that trillions of dollars in transfer payments have been made to African Americans in the form of welfare benefits and racial benefits. Has not the “debt” been paid?

Laws such as the Fair Chance in Housing is another attempt to victimize the black Americans while promoting “white guilt” among non-black population. Moreover, it may have an adverse effect — landlords may simply refuse to consider non-white people as potential tenants.



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