

Support HB 749 / SB 581 – Ban the Box

Encourage employment opportunities amongst formerly incarcerated individuals.

THE CHALLENGE

- People with a criminal background need to be able to work and earn money just like everyone else.
- Many people with a criminal background apply for jobs for which they are well-qualified but do not have their job applications even considered because of their past.
- The State of Maryland should encourage all qualified applicants, including those with a prior criminal conviction history, to apply for state employment.

WHAT THIS MEANS

- The “box” refers to the question on state job applications where prospective state employees are asked to check “yes” or “no” if they have ever been convicted of a crime.
- Removing the question from the application simply allows applicants to get a foot in the door and prove their qualifications rather than be automatically dismissed because of a box they checked at the beginning of the process.

BACKGROUND CHECKS ARE STILL CONDUCTED

- The State can still conduct background checks on applicants. The bill simply removes the question from the application so that candidates have a chance to interview and prove their qualifications before the background check occurs.

MANY OTHER PLACES HAVE “BANNED THE BOX”

- Minnesota and Hawaii as well as several cities – including Baltimore – already have the policy in effect. Others cities include Boston, Chicago, Minneapolis, San Francisco, and St. Paul.
- Policies are under consideration in Massachusetts, Ohio, Los Angeles, Newark, Philadelphia, and Oakland.

THE SOLUTION

- The fact that an applicant may has a criminal conviction history, standing alone, should not automatically disqualify a candidate if they are otherwise qualified for the job
- By removing the question from state job applications, more qualified individuals will have a chance at gainful employment.
- The State cannot ask private employers to consider hiring ex-offenders unless it does the same.

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