

Testimony for HB 5237: An Act Concerning Fair Chance Employment
March 3, 2016

Dear Senator Gomes, Representative Tercyak and other distinguished members of the Labor Committee:

My name is Kali Guise, and I am a sophomore at Connecticut College, currently residing in New London. I stand in support of HB: 5237 An Act Concerning Fair Chance Employment. This bill would eliminate barriers to employment for individuals with a criminal record.

My mother is a mobility instructor for the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind, and many of her clients are individuals who are formerly incarcerated. Therefore, I have grown up meeting incredibly kind, decent people who are unable to move forward in life due to their past mistakes, which they have already spent time acknowledging in prison. I feel that as a society, but more specifically as the state of Connecticut, we should not be engaging in policies that will hold people back, but instead should be helping them move forward, as well as finding ways to solve the underlying problems that are causing individuals to become incarcerated.

This bill achieves these goals, for it allows individuals to have a greater chance of bettering their own lives, but improves the economy as well. By giving formerly incarcerated people a better chance to work, we would be reintegrating these people into society, meaning that they would be paying taxes and buying goods and services which would increase sales taxes. Individuals with jobs are also less likely to experience recidivism, which means that they would not enter back into the criminal justice system, and in turn would not be an extra expense for the state to account for.

“Banning the box” is essential to many citizens of Connecticut, for one in three adults experience difficulties in gaining employment due to their records, and a formerly incarcerated person is 50% less likely to receive a follow up for a job due to their record. So though this bill is in the best interest of Connecticut from an economic viewpoint, it is also crucial in giving people a second chance to properly contribute to our society. If we wish to live in a more just and humane world, than this bill is a necessary next step.

I strongly support Fair Chance Employment and hope the committee will vote favorably on HB 5237.

Thank you for your time,
Kali Guise