



# STATE OF CONNECTICUT

## ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICAN AFFAIRS COMMISSION



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Alok Bhatt

Dear Senator Coleman, Representative Tong, and esteemed members of the Judiciary Committee of the Connecticut General Assembly:

My name is Alok Bhatt. I serve as Legislative Analyst for the Asian Pacific American Affairs Commission (APAAC).

APAAC believes equity in employment opportunities for individuals with prior interaction with the criminal justice system will lead to a more productive and peaceful Connecticut.

In promoting this position, APAAC writes in support of Senate Bill 430: An Act Concerning Employment Following Arrest, Criminal Charge or Conviction and Equal Opportunity Employment Commission Guidance (SB 430). However, we would also direct the members of the committee to House Bill 5237: An Act Concerning Fair Chance Employment (HB 5237).

While APAAC supports the intent of SB 430, we believe a bill dedicated to affording formerly incarcerated individuals a fair chance at employment would better serve its purpose.

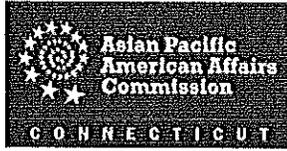
The EEOC guidance on considering arrests and criminal records in employment decisions recommends good employment practices, and highlights the disparate impact of the criminal justice system on communities of color<sup>1</sup>. However, Connecticut needs a strong written policy that delineates standards for employers and provides job applicants with some recourse against discrimination.

HB 5237, as presently drafted, achieves this objective. Under HB 5237, notwithstanding present state or federal regulations, an employer cannot deny an applicant employment solely on the basis of a criminal record if five years has passed since the date of release for a misdemeanor, or if ten years has passed since the date of release for a felon.

Furthermore, HB 5237 mandates that employers not run background checks on applicants until after a desirable applicant has been given a conditional offer on the job.

APAAC commends the Judiciary Committee for recognizing that formerly incarcerated individuals must be allowed to exercise their

<sup>1</sup> [http://www.eeoc.gov/laws/guidance/arrest\\_conviction.cfm#VIII](http://www.eeoc.gov/laws/guidance/arrest_conviction.cfm#VIII)



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freedom to pursue productive lives. However, APAAC believes Connecticut must be explicit in stating this position and the rights afforded to both employees and employers.

We thank you for your time and consideration of this important matter.

Sincerely,

Alok Bhatt  
*Legislative Analyst, APAAC*

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