



TO: The Honorable Members of the PA House Judiciary Committee

FROM: Alex Halper, Director, Government Affairs

DATE: June 14, 2020

RE: Support S.B. 637 – Occupational licensing reform

---

I write on behalf of the Pennsylvania Chamber of Business and Industry to urge your support for S.B. 637 to provide occupational licensing reform related to applicants with a criminal record, which we understand the Committee may consider tomorrow.

This bill will help address workforce challenges experienced by many employers and sectors of Pennsylvania's economy and facilitate employment for individuals with a criminal record

Pennsylvania state government currently oversees 29 professional boards and commissions that administer over 250 types of professional licenses; and rules among these entities vary in terms of how and when a criminal record can factor into decisions for granting licenses. S.B. 637 establishes a more uniform standard, including providing that a license may only be denied if the record is related to the occupation. Employers are required to follow a similar standard in the event a job applicant has a criminal record and it makes sense to be applied in this context as well.

The bill also requires licensing boards and commissions to determine and publicize the types of criminal records that directly relate to particular licenses and allow potential applicants to receive a ruling on whether their criminal record would be considered directly related to a particular occupation. These provisions will add much needed transparency and predictability to this process and allow individuals to make informed decisions related to education and training opportunities.

Pennsylvania is in the midst of a workforce crisis; helping otherwise qualified individuals obtain occupational licenses is one part of a multi-pronged strategy to address these workforce challenges and we urge you to support S.B. 637. Please contact Alex Halper at [ahalper@pachamber.org](mailto:ahalper@pachamber.org) or 717-645-8730 with any questions or to discuss.