



TO: The Honorable Members of the PA House Judiciary Committee

FROM: Alex Halper, Director, Government Affairs

DATE: Dec. 9, 2019

RE: Support bills to encourage reentrant employment

I write on behalf of the PA Chamber of Business and Industry to urge support for several bills scheduled to be considered in committee today to help facilitate employment among reentrants.

Pennsylvania is in the midst of a workforce crisis as many employers struggle to find qualified workers to fill open positions. Helping facilitate employment among individuals with a criminal record or who were formerly incarcerated is an important part of a multi-pronged strategy to address these workforce challenges. Several bills on the agenda today will help advance this cause:

H.B. 1477 (Delozier): Establishes a more uniform standard for state agencies considering criminal history of an individual applying for an occupational license, including limiting to circumstances in which the prior offense is related to the occupation. Employers follow a similar standard for job applicants and it makes sense to be applied in this context as well.

The bill also allows potential applicants to receive a ruling on whether their criminal record could be disqualifying so they can make informed decisions related to education and training opportunities.

H.B. 1555 (Delozier): Updates and improves probation and parole laws including incenting individuals on probation to pursue job training programs by reducing sentences once a program is successfully completed. The bill also limits the circumstances in which a technical violation can lead to parole revocation, which can disrupt employment and discourage employers from hiring parolees.

H.B. 2040 (Harris): Establishes the PA Second Chance Jobs website, on which employers willing to hire ex-offenders may post job openings. This legislation will help individuals find jobs, reintegrate into the community and avoid recidivism; and also benefit employers who increasingly report success when they incorporate this focus into their hiring practices.

We urge you to support these bills. Please contact Alex Halper at ahalper@pachamber.org or 717-720-5471 with any questions or to discuss.