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October 23, 2019

To: Chairwoman Manning
Vice Chair Dean
Ranking Member Lepore-Hagan
Members of the House Commerce and Labor Committee

Thank you for the opportunity to express my support for House Bill 263. My name is John Rush, and I am the President and CEO of CleanTurn, a business based right here in Columbus.

CleanTurn revitalizes spaces by providing professional residential and commercial cleaning and interior demolition services. We are a for-profit business which employs individuals who face barriers to entry into the workforce, including prior criminal convictions and substance use disorders.

Since 2012, our business has been giving these individuals a second chance – some might say, a fresh start – at employment. Doing so has led not only to personal and professional growth for our employees, but also commercial success for our firm.

Our mission was to address the social challenges of incarceration, generational poverty, substance abuse, and mental-health challenges. To this end, we created a business model that was not dependent on grant subsidies or philanthropy, but one which would leverage the market demand for specific services to generate revenue that, in turn, could be reinvested into our mission.

In our first seven years, CleanTurn has provided over 800 employment opportunities and generated an economic return of over 20 million dollars in Central Ohio. In 2017, CleanTurn funded the launch of Third Way Café in the Greater Hilltop Community of Columbus, which was recognized within its first year as one of the top ten coffee shops in the region.

None of this success would have been possible without our employees, who are hardworking, dedicated individuals who have chosen not to let the circumstances or mistakes of their past dictate their future.

I share this story of success to emphasize – as you consider legislation which would empower more individuals whose stories mirror those of our team members– that individuals with criminal histories can be integral to the success of a commercial enterprise.



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House Bill 263 is one essential piece of a long-overdue process of criminal justice and occupational licensing reform. I present my support for this work because it addresses a serious issue in the way Ohio's licensing boards treat individuals with criminal records.

I stand in opposition to blanket bans, which prohibit anyone with a criminal conviction from obtaining an occupational license, regardless of the relevance of the offense to the practice of the occupation. I present you with the contention that it is not only individuals with criminal records who are hurt when their opportunities to work are limited, but also their communities – communities like the ones in the Hilltop.

I have seen firsthand that when former offenders get back to work and reintegrate into society, there are significant community benefits. Conversely, when individuals are inhibited or prohibited from working, personal and community health degrades.

I am very passionate about reducing barriers, improving training, and opening doors to those who have complicated histories. Doing so will reduce our tax payer burden and, even more importantly, positively impact men and women in their path to re-entry and recovery.

As a social entrepreneur, my professional focus lies in changing the paradigm of how we think about the relationship between business and the social sector. I have devoted my career to building small businesses designed to empower individuals with significant barriers to employment by presenting them with the opportunity to choose meaningful work. I assert to you today that HB 263 would improve Ohio's business landscape by removing unnecessary barriers for individuals who want to make their return to society a full one.

Let us work together to ensure that everyone who is willing to give their full effort, gain skills, and commit themselves to a profession has a fair shot at supporting themselves through work. HB 263 is an essential piece of creating that reality for Ohioans.

I welcome you to contact me with any questions or feedback using the contact information below. Thank you for your time and attention.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Rush".

John Rush

President/CEO | CleanTurn

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