

Quinnan Howard, Program Coordinator with the Montgomery County Office of Reentry, Please note that some licenses restrictions have “blanket bans” regardless of relevance to the profession or public safety, and “good character” provisions can lead to denial simply for an arrest. The passing of HB263 is important to revise the restrictions that continue to hinder returning citizens successful reentry.

In Montgomery County, the importance of passing HB263 is evident based on the experience of a former Office of Reentry program graduate. In this case the graduate, a teacher who was licensed by the State of Ohio, lost her license due serving time in prison for a felony conviction for fraud. A few years after release from prison, the former teacher appealed for reinstatement of her teacher’s license. She was awarded reinstatement in 2018 and is currently employed at a local charter school where she is held in high regards. The determination to reinstate her was considered based on her community involvement and contributions after her release from prison. She is married, a mother, and a productive member in society.

Limiting employment opportunities leads to higher recidivism. I have Master’s of Business Administration Degree and Master’s Degree in Education and currently teach at the university level and the local community college, but would still have difficulty due to my record if I tried to teach in a K-12 school. Hopefully with the passing of HB263 and the evidence of the returning citizen I spoke of earlier, that I would be able to pursue a state teachers license if I chose to do so.

Furthermore, licensing barriers negatively affect the economy, with employment barriers for those with a felony conviction amounting to a loss of at least 1.7 million workers nationally and a cost of \$78 billion in 2014. Licensing restrictions also prevent many former offenders from starting their own businesses.