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State Representative, 51st House District

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Chair Abrams, Vice Chair Williams, Ranking Member Brown, and members of the House Criminal Justice Committee, I appreciate the opportunity to present sponsor testimony on House Bill 460, alongside Representative Seitz. This piece of legislation is about reforming and redeeming individuals to be a part of society by removing barriers to employment for individuals with certain criminal records, while also providing crucial protections for employers.

The core of this bill lies in its provisions that trigger the sealing of eligible criminal records. It establishes procedures for courts to seal records, provided certain criteria are met. This not only streamlines the process but also ensures that deserving individuals have a fair chance at reintegrating into society without the burden of past mistakes hindering their prospects.

Under this bill, the Bureau of Criminal Identification and Investigation (BCII) plays a pivotal role in identifying records eligible for sealing, while also allowing for objections from prosecutors and or BCII itself under specific circumstances. This balanced approach ensures that public safety concerns are addressed while still prioritizing the rehabilitation and reintegration of individuals into the workforce.

Furthermore, the bill includes provisions to protect employers from liability in cases of negligent hiring or supervision involving sealed or expunged records. By providing immunity to employers, we incentivize the hiring of individuals in need of a second chance, ultimately benefiting both employers and our communities.

The Getting Rehabilitated Ohioans Working Act represents a significant step forward in our efforts to promote rehabilitation, reduce recidivism, and create a broader workforce.

Chair Abrams and committee members, thank you for the opportunity to present sponsor testimony on House Bill 460. I urge my colleagues to support this vital piece of legislation and I am available to address any questions you may have at this time.