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**Senate Workforce Development Committee  
Proponent Testimony for Amended S.B. 143  
January 27, 2026**

Glenn Harris, Director of Prevention  
Ohio Domestic Violence Network

Chair Koehler, Vice Chair Reynolds, Ranking Member Ingram, and members of the Senate Workforce Development Committee:

My name is Glenn Harris, and I am the Director of Prevention at the Ohio Domestic Violence Network. ODVN supports S.B. 143 as amended because it advances fair chance hiring in Ohio. In 2024, ODVN's 76 member programs provided 127,006 survivors with legal advocacy, housing, support groups, workforce development, transportation, and other services.<sup>1</sup> We know that safety is not only about escaping physical harm but also having the economic stability to live free from abuse.

S.B. 143 is a practical step for economic stability since it would prohibit most private employers from asking about criminal history on the initial job application, so applicants are first considered based on their qualifications.

This matters for survivors. Many survivors have records directly connected to abuse and survival, including coercion into illegal activity, arrests connected to self-defense, or involvement in the system during crisis. Under current hiring practices, people can be screened out before they ever have the chance to explain their qualifications. Fair chance hiring helps keep the focus on skills and job fit at the start of the process.

Economic stability is violence prevention and stable employment is a protective factor. Our *Imprisonment Rates for Nonviolent Crimes* fact sheet highlights that nearly 40 percent of Ohio's prison admissions are for low-level felonies, and research shows that when people with nonviolent records have access to jobs, recidivism goes down, families stabilize, and

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<sup>1</sup> ODVN Membership Application. 2024. Available from: [https://www.odvn.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/ODVN\\_FactSheet\\_August2025.pdf](https://www.odvn.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/ODVN_FactSheet_August2025.pdf)



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communities are safer.<sup>2</sup> By expanding fair chance hiring to the private sector, S.B. 143 reduces the economic instability that fuels cycles of violence. This legislation does not remove employers' ability to run background checks or make appropriate decisions. It ensures Ohioans are not automatically excluded before their qualifications are even seen.

The amendment for S.B. 143 makes it clearer about what happens if a private employer violates the bill. It would treat a violation as an unlawful discriminatory practice under Ohio employment civil rights law.

However, we also want to be transparent that we have concerns with the amendment.

First, the amendment removes the notice and response process. Without written notice of a preliminary denial and an opportunity to submit additional information before a final decision, qualified applicants, including survivors, can be screened out based on incomplete information or background check errors.

Second, the amendment removes the requirement that employers consider whether an applicant's criminal history is directly related to the duties of the job, including factors like the nature of the offense and the time that has passed. This change reduces consistency and fairness in how records are evaluated.

Third, the amendment weakens protections related to arrests and diversion. The introduced version limited employers from using certain non-conviction information during the background check process. The amendment focuses on what employers may request, which leaves uncertainty about how arrest or diversion information may be used if it appears through other means.

ODVN supports S.B. 143 because survivors need access to employment to achieve safety and stability. While we have concerns with the amendment, we support advancing the bill and moving fair chance hiring forward in Ohio.

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<sup>2</sup> Imprisonment Rates Nonviolent Crimes. 2019. Available from <https://www.odvn.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Imprisonment-Rates-Nonviolent-Crimes.pdf>