

Written Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 143

Fair Chance Hiring

Submitted by:

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City of Bexley Councilman

Before the:

Ohio General Assembly
[Workforce Development Committee]

Date:

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Chair, Vice Chair, Ranking Member, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony in support of **Senate Bill 143**. My name is Alex Silverman, and I serve as a City of Bexley Councilman. I respectfully urge your support and a **YES vote on Senate Bill 143**, which removes unnecessary barriers to employment by prohibiting criminal history questions on initial job applications.

Senate Bill 143 is a practical, balanced policy that strengthens Ohio's workforce, supports public safety, and promotes successful reentry for individuals who have served their sentence. The bill does not eliminate background checks or limit employer discretion. Instead, it ensures applicants are first evaluated on qualifications, readiness, and merit before their past involvement with the justice system is considered.

Why Senate Bill 143 Matters

Employment is one of the most effective tools available to reduce recidivism and improve community stability. National research consistently shows that individuals who secure stable employment after release are significantly less likely to reoffend, while states benefit from reduced correctional costs and stronger local economies. At the same time, Ohio employers continue to face workforce shortages across multiple industries. Fair chance hiring policies expand the labor pool while maintaining public safety.

Professional Experience and Direct Observation

My support for Senate Bill 143 is informed by direct experience. Earlier in my career, I oversaw food service operations within a correctional setting and worked with individuals preparing for reentry through structured employment and training programs. Through this work, I observed how accountability, skills training, and employment expectations prepare individuals for successful reintegration.

One individual I worked with, Antwan Chandler, demonstrated what is possible when opportunity is paired with responsibility. During his incarceration, he earned his Level 2 Food Protection certification, completed a college degree, and was selected as an In2Work fellow through Aramark. He participated in paid employment that allowed him to build work history, professional habits, and financial stability prior to release.

Upon reentry, Mr. Chandler secured employment in the nonprofit sector providing social services and later continued to advance in public service. Despite his qualifications and work ethic, he encountered barriers to advancement due to a prior conviction, even after years of demonstrated growth and service. He persevered, continued seeking mentorship and guidance, and remained committed to contributing positively to his community. Today, he is employed full-time with a county agency, helping others successfully navigate post-release life.

His experience reflects a broader challenge that Senate Bill 143 directly addresses.

Policy Impact and Public Benefit

As a ServSafe instructor and In2Work program educator, I have seen firsthand how skill-building, certifications, and employment standards prepare individuals to succeed in the workforce. When people are allowed to compete fairly, they are more likely to secure stable employment, support their families, and contribute positively to society.

Work provides structure, accountability, and dignity. These are essential components of successful reentry and safer communities. By delaying criminal history inquiries until later in the hiring process, Senate Bill 143 reduces unnecessary exclusion while preserving employer decision-making and public safety.

Conclusion and Request

Our goal should be to reintegrate individuals who have served their sentence by reducing barriers to employment, modeling professional behavior, and strengthening our

communities. I can think of nothing more dignified than a job that allows someone to provide for themselves and their family.

For these reasons, I respectfully request that the committee **support and vote YES on Senate Bill 143**, both in committee and on the floor. I would welcome the opportunity to provide additional testimony or serve as a resource on fair chance hiring and workforce reentry.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

Alex Silverman

City of Bexley Councilman