

TO: Senate Workforce Development Committee

FROM: Gary Daniels, Legislative Director, ACLU of Ohio

DATE: January 27, 2026

RE: Senate Bill 143 – Proponent Testimony

To Chairman Koehler, Vice Chair Reynolds, Ranking Member Ingram, and members of the Senate Workforce Development Committee, thank you for this opportunity to provide further proponent testimony in support of Senate Bill 143.



While the ACLU of Ohio has previously testified in favor of this bill, we have been asked by others our position on the now, or soon-to-be, amended version of SB 143. Accordingly, we thought it prudent to provide these brief, additional thoughts.

To be clear, this amended version of SB 143 is a diluted version of the original/as introduced version. Gone in this new version are various aspects and employer requirements that provided a more comprehensive, holistic approach to address the vexing issue of criminal records and problems obtaining employment. However, this amended version also preserves the core goal of legislation of this type.

As has always been the case for the ACLU of Ohio and this specific issue, the goal is to ensure, as much as possible, that Ohio workers are not unfairly and forever identified with, and ostracized because of, their past mistakes and record.

Thankfully, Amended Senate Bill 143 still delays the ability of employers to ask applicants and prospective employees about criminal records, if any. But neither the as-introduced version of SB 143, nor the substitute bill, prohibits employers from considering criminal backgrounds later in the vetting and hiring process.

It has not gone unnoticed every single member of this committee has taken steps to improve, and shown support for, past legislative efforts to tackle the various problems and concerns arising from underemployment and unemployment of people with criminal records. Your past support and thoughtfulness has always been appreciated by the ACLU of Ohio and we further encourage your efforts with regard to SB 143 and hopefully similar, future legislation.

For these reasons and more, the ACLU of Ohio encourages your favorable consideration and passage of Senate Bill 143.

4506 Chester Avenue
Cleveland, OH 44103
P: (614) 586-1959
F: (216) 472-2210

1108 City Park Avenue
Suite 203
Columbus, OH 43206
P: (614) 586-1959
F: (614) 586-1974

acluohio.org
contact@acluohio.org

Dr. Ebony Speakes-Hall, LISW-S
President

J. Bennett Guess
Executive Director