

Written Testimony In Support of Ohio Senate Bill 143  
Ohio Senate Workforce Development Committee  
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Chairman Koehler, Vice Chair Reynolds, Ranking Member Ingram, and members of the Workforce Development Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit my testimony in strong support of Ohio Senate Bill 143.

My name is Reginald E. Battle (Reggie) and I 'am the founder and Executive Director of Life After Incarceration Initiative LLC., a community-based organization dedicated to providing holistic supportive community services for reentry/reintegration individuals returning from incarceration. I also work directly with individuals and families seeking expungement/records sealing, as well as Certification of Qualification for Employment (CQEs).

Through this work, I see daily the lifelong consequences of criminal records-even for minor, nonviolent, or decades old offenses-and how those barriers prevent people from fully reintegrating into society. Senate Bill 143 offers Ohio a meaningful opportunity to expand access to justice, strengthen families, stabilize communities, and grow workforce.

#### Why Senate Bill 143

Ohio's current expungement/records sealing laws, though improved in recent years, still leave too many people behind. Individuals who have demonstrated rehabilitation, stability and personal growth continue to face:

- Barriers to employment
- Denial of housing
- Limited access to education
- Financial exclusion
- Persistent stigma

Senate Bill 143 addresses these barriers by broadening eligibility, reducing waiting periods, and creating clearer pathways for relief. These changes allow individuals who have paid their debt to society to truly move forward-not just to survive but thrive.

The Human Impact

Every week I meet people who are:

- Qualified for employment but denied due to background checks
- Parents are unable to secure housing for their families
- Veterans struggling to reentry/reintegrate civilian life
- Young adults whose early mistakes permanently block opportunity

Many of these individuals have years-sometimes decades-of clean records, stable employment, and strong community ties. Yet a single past mistake continues to define their future.

Senate Bill 143 hopes not by erasing accountability, but by recognizing growth, rehabilitation, and redemption.

#### Public Safety & Economic Benefits

Research and real-world experience show that stable employment and housing reduces recidivism when people can legally clear or seal their records.

- They earn higher wages
- They contribute more to taxes
- They rely less on public assistance
- They become stable parents and caregivers
- Communities become safer

This bill is not soft on crime-it is smart on public safety and economic development. Ohio employers consistently report workforce shortages. SB 143 helps unlock a skilled, motivated, and ready workforce that already lives in our communities.

#### Equity & Fairness

Communities of color and low-income populations have been disproportionately impacted by criminal justice involvement. Expanding access to records relief is a critical step towards addressing systemic inequities and ensuring fair access to opportunities for all Ohioans'.

#### In-Conclusion

Senate Bill 143 represents common-sense criminal justice reform that:

- Strengthens families
- Supports workforce development
- Improves public safety
- Promotes fairness and redemption

I respectfully urge this committee to advance SB 143 and recommend its passage.

Thank you for your time, leadership, and commitment to building a more just and equitable Ohio.

Respectfully Submitted,

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