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FAIR CHANCE-CRIMINAL
JUSTICE PROJECT

UNLOCKING OPPORTUNITIES

The Business Case for Fair Chance Employment
and Supporting Second Chance Policy Reform

What is the Second Chance or Fair Chance Movement?

Efforts to ensure every person with records have meaningful opportunities to employment, housing, education, and more



Why Support Second Chances?

Everyone, including people with criminal records, deserves a fair chance to obtain meaningful employment to support themselves and their families.





A Criminal Record in North Carolina

- There are approximately 1.6 million people in North Carolina with a criminal record
- Criminal records of all types (even dismissed charges) cause devastating “collateral consequences”
- People of color are more likely to face severe barriers to reentry and opportunity.
- There are 1,000+ NC laws and 1,200+ federal laws that shut people out of opportunities because of their criminal record.

Removing Barriers: The Relief Timeline

- Prior to 2011, there was limited relief for people with criminal records seeking employment in North Carolina.
- Over the last decade, laws, policies and practices (including expunction laws) have changed to give more people with records access to meaningful employment.
- Record relief laws will never be expanded enough to provide relief to everyone with a criminal record.
- Businesses and business leaders are essential to closing the gap because they can provide meaningful employment opportunities.





EVERYONE DESERVES A
FAIR CHANCE TO WORK

FAIR CHANCE EMPLOYMENT



A Workforce Shortage: Conflicting Problems

According to a US Department of Commerce study, even if every unemployed worker was hired in an available job, there would still be nearly 160,000 open positions and no one to fill them.

At the same time there is a workforce shortage, people with criminal records have difficulty getting and keeping meaningful employment.

Benefits of Second Chance Employment

- Leads to higher retention rates, lower turnover, and **more loyal employees.**
- **Qualifies employers for tax incentives**, the Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC), **and free insurance**, Federal Bonding, for hiring people with certain records.
- Helps break the cycle of recidivism and therefore **advances public safety.**
- **Improves the economy** by reducing public spending associated with cycles of re-incarceration, decreasing the number of people who rely on taxpayer-funded assistance programs, and leading to more people being employed and paying income taxes into the economy.



Recommendations for Fair Chance Employment

- Use people-first language like “person with a conviction or charge” OR “directly impacted person.”
 - Avoid using language such as “ex-offender,” “felon,” and “ex-convict” that stigmatizes people with criminal records.
- Partner with community-based, reentry service providers to help recruit talent.
- Broaden the equal opportunity statement on job postings to include language about not discriminating based on criminal records.
- Remove questions about a criminal record from the job application.



Recommendations for Fair Chance Employment Cont..

- Use a background check company with a history of equitable reporting, if there is a need to conduct background checks.
- Do not disqualify a potential employee based on arrests that did not result in conviction
- Give applicants an opportunity to explain their criminal history
- Invest in talent development to ensure advancement to higher level positions



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becoming
a fair chance
employer





SECOND CHANCE REFORMS



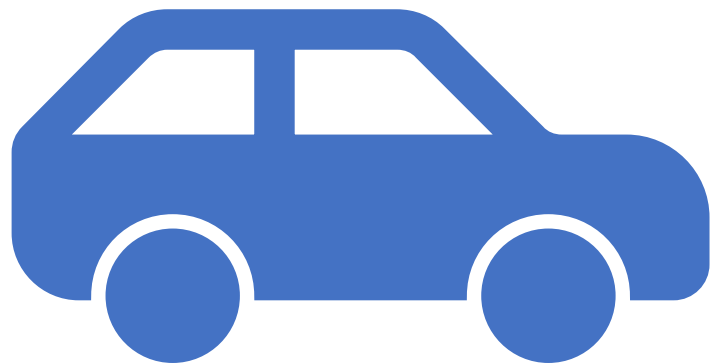
Second Chance Bills to Increase Work Opportunities *Clean Slate*

- SAVE THE SECOND CHANCE ACT- Effective legislation would ensure eligible individuals have access to expunctions for dismissed and not guilty charges.
- House Bill 778 (2023) - This bill will regulate the use of mugshots. It would require third-party companies to remove and destroy mugshots from their websites and written publications upon notice that the underlying charge has ended in not guilty, dismissal, and expunction.

Second Chance Bills to Increase Work Opportunities *Fines & Fees*

- End Debt-Based Driver's License Suspension, as modeled in House Bill 888 (2023) - This policy change will end driver's license suspensions for unpaid traffic tickets and missed court dates.
- Senate Bill 339 (2023) - This bill will end certain driver's license suspensions that are not related to public safety.
- House Bill 979 (2024) – This bill will reduce certain criminal justice fines and fees.





Drive Opportunities: Eliminate Certain Driver's License Suspensions

NEED: Approximately 95 % of North Carolina's workers need a car to get to work

PROBLEM: Hundreds of Thousands of North Carolinians have suspended driver's license for matters unrelated to public safety. Not having a driver's license can create significant barriers to getting and keeping quality employment

SOLUTION: End Driver's License Suspensions for unpaid traffic tickets and missed court dates, as modeled in House Bill 888 (2023)

Take Action to *Drive* Opportunities

Sign-on to a statewide letter and join a growing group of business leaders who want to strengthen work force by ending driver's license suspensions for missing a court date or unpaid traffic tickets



Save the Second Chance Act

NEED: More than one million North Carolinians need access to an expunction in order to successfully reenter their communities, obtain jobs, and contribute to the economy,

PROBLEM: Most North Carolina residents do not have access to an expunction to clear dismissed and not guilty charges or old convictions, due to lack of access to legal representation or resources needed to navigate the court system.

SOLUTION: SAVE THE SECOND CHANCE ACT. Advocate for a restart to automated expunctions. Effective legislation would ensure eligible individuals have access to expunctions for dismissed and not guilty charges.



Take Action to Save the Second Chance Act

We need your help as we fight to save the Second Chance Act. [Please take a few minutes to contact your lawmaker](#) and tell them to uphold their promise to provide second chances for North Carolina.





Thank You

For more information,
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