

Get NC Back to Work Second Chance Reforms

Adapted from Conservatives for Criminal Justice Reform's 2023 Get Back to Work Agenda

As new industries are moving to NC at an unprecedented rate, signaling tremendous growth in the coming years and huge opportunities for employment, employers are desperately looking for staff. One solution to address the workforce shortage is to tap into workers with criminal records. One in four North Carolinians have a criminal record which prevents them from getting and keeping meaningful employment. That means employers are *missing out* on potential hires from a *quarter* of the state's otherwise eligible candidates.

End debt-based driver's license suspensions.

As of January 2024, there were approximately 300,000 North Carolinians with suspended driver's license because of unpaid traffic tickets. Not having a driver's license can create barriers to opportunity by making it hard to get a meaningful job or affordable housing

Expand access to and eligible for criminal record expunction.

A criminal record can be a barrier to meaningful employment. For the 1.6 million North Carolinians with a criminal record, an expunction, which clears eligible convictions and charges, is a lifeline that can lead to employment or higher wages.

Regulate Distribution, Use, Removal, and Destruction of Mugshots.

Mugshots can cause people to face severe barriers to reentry and opportunity by harming a person's ability to find employment, housing, or navigate everyday social situations.

Expand and Promote Fair Chance Hiring Policies.

Twenty-nines states and the over 150 local government have passed laws and policies to “ban the box” from the application for public employment. In 2019, Governor Cooper adopted a fair chance hiring policy for the public jobs under the governor's purview.

Repeal the NC Unauthorized Substance Tax (NC Drug Tax).

The NC Drug Tax discourages people from joining the labor markets, using banks, filing taxes, starting businesses, buying houses, and conducting other activities that contribute to the economy.

Eliminate Felony Drug SNAP and TANF Ban.

People returning home after incarceration are more likely to face food insecurity than the general public. SNAP access reduces recidivism by offsetting challenges that arise from a criminal record and ensures people's basic needs are lawfully met.