

118TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. RES. 644

Expressing support for the designation of April 1, 2024, through April 30, 2024, as “Fair Chance Jobs Month”.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

APRIL 16, 2024

Mr. MARKEY (for himself, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Ms. BUTLER, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. PADILLA, Ms. WARREN, and Mr. WELCH) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

RESOLUTION

Expressing support for the designation of April 1, 2024, through April 30, 2024, as “Fair Chance Jobs Month”.

Whereas, in the United States—

- (1) nearly 80,000,000 people have a record of arrest or conviction;
- (2) an estimated 19,000,000 people have felony convictions;
- (3) nearly 13,000,000 people are charged each year with misdemeanor offenses;
- (4) 600,000 people are released each year from Federal and State prisons;
- (5) Black, Indigenous, and Latino people are 5, 4.2, and 2.4 times more likely than White people to be incar-

cerated, respectively, and also face higher rates of arrest;
and

(6) LGBTQ+ individuals are 3 times more likely to
be incarcerated and also face higher rates of arrest;

Whereas people who have been convicted of a crime and
served their sentence continue to face consequences after
release due to systemic biases and stigmas against for-
merly incarcerated individuals;

Whereas recidivism rates in the United States are among the
highest in the world, with almost 44 percent of people
who are released returning to incarceration within 1 year;

Whereas, in the United States, nearly $\frac{2}{3}$ of the formerly in-
carcerated population is jobless at any given time;

Whereas, in the United States, nearly 14,000 laws and regu-
lations and 48,000 collateral consequences restrict for-
merly incarcerated individuals from getting professional
licenses needed to work in some jobs;

Whereas 20 States and the District of Columbia allow occu-
pational licensing boards to categorically reject applicants
with prior convictions;

Whereas obstacles to employment, such as difficulty obtaining
identification needed for employment, add undue burdens
on returning citizens and formerly incarcerated individ-
uals;

Whereas formerly incarcerated individuals earn nearly \$100
less per week than the average worker;

Whereas fair-chance employers can leverage financial incen-
tives, such as the work opportunity tax credit, to benefit
from hiring formerly incarcerated individuals;

Whereas employing returning citizens and formerly incarcerated individuals will result in a robust, vibrant, diverse, and resilient workforce;

Whereas having jobs that pay living wages, are conducive to health, provide opportunities for skillset development, provide opportunities for promotion, and provide benefits will facilitate stable employment and reduce recidivism;

Whereas returning citizens who have received vocational training while incarcerated are 28 percent more likely to obtain employment within 1 year of reentry into society than those lacking such training; and

Whereas, in addition to employment insecurity, returning citizens and formerly incarcerated people face numerous other obstacles to reentry and societal reintegration, including—

(1) housing insecurity and homelessness rates that are 10 times higher than the general public;

(2) near total restrictions in 12 States on access to temporary assistance for needy families established under part A of title IV of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 601 et seq.) or the supplemental nutrition assistance program established under the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2011 et seq.); and

(3) greater prevalence of chronic health conditions, lower quality and coverage of health insurance, and mortality rates that are 13 times higher than the general public: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the Senate—

2 (1) expresses support for the designation of
3 April 1, 2024, through April 30, 2024, as “Fair
4 Chance Jobs Month”; and

1 (2) supports efforts to—

2 (A) ensure that people directly impacted by
3 incarceration obtain stable and high-quality em-
4 ployment, housing, healthcare, and nutrition;

5 (B) dismantle structural barriers to fair-
6 chance hiring and employment, such as licens-
7 ing restrictions, employer liability, and insur-
8 ance restrictions;

9 (C) expand workforce development pro-
10 grams for returning citizens, formerly incarcer-
11 ated individuals, and others directly impacted
12 by incarceration, including—

13 (i) pre-apprenticeship programs;

14 (ii) registered apprenticeship pro-
15 grams;

16 (iii) career coaching, résumé-building,
17 technology literacy, and other skillset de-
18 velopment programs; and

19 (iv) programs that educate employers
20 on best practices for, and the benefits of,
21 fair-chance hiring;

22 (D) match jobs providers with returning
23 citizens and formerly incarcerated individuals
24 seeking jobs;

1 (E) support efforts from labor unions and
2 worker organizations to engage returning citi-
3 zens and formerly incarcerated individuals who
4 are seeking jobs;

5 (F) publicize work opportunities that are
6 open to applicants with prior arrest or convic-
7 tion records; and

8 (G) foster greater collaboration and dia-
9 logue between Federal, State, and local govern-
10 ment agencies, community-based organizations,
11 advocacy groups, employers, labor unions, cur-
12 rently and formerly incarcerated individuals,
13 and others directly impacted by incarceration to
14 enhance fair-chance hiring and employment and
15 help to heal communities impacted by mass in-
16 carceration.

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