

**CONCURRENT RESOLUTION ENCOURAGING THE
EMPLOYMENT OF QUALIFIED EX-OFFENDERS BY
PUBLIC ENTITIES**

2022 GENERAL SESSION

STATE OF UTAH

Chief Sponsor: Ashlee Matthews

Senate Sponsor: _____

LONG TITLE

General Description:

This resolution encourages all public entities to take seriously the need to employ ex-offenders and supports the employment of qualified ex-offenders by public entities.

Highlighted Provisions:

This resolution:

- ▶ recognizes that ex-offenders have paid their debt to society and many wish to be contributing members of the state's workforce;
- ▶ encourages all public entities to take seriously the need to employ ex-offenders; and
- ▶ supports the employment of qualified ex-offenders by public entities.

Special Clauses:

None

Be it resolved by the Legislature of the state of Utah, the Governor concurring therein:

WHEREAS, Utah has an incarceration rate of approximately 206 per 100,000 people, with more than 14,000 confined in state prisons or local jails and another 15,000 on probation or parole;

WHEREAS, a robust body of research consistently shows that once an individual has been released from incarceration, finding employment is vital to the reintegration of that



individual into society;

WHEREAS, people who have been incarcerated face a variety of collateral consequences that may limit access to employment, business and occupational licensing, housing, education, and other opportunities;

WHEREAS, the unemployment rate among ex-offenders is nearly five times higher than that for the general population and the homelessness rate among ex-offenders is nearly ten times higher than the general population;

WHEREAS, a lack of employment, housing, and other support systems upon reentry increases the likelihood of continued involvement in the criminal justice system;

WHEREAS, the state has a vested interest in reducing the rate of unemployment and homelessness among ex-offenders;

WHEREAS, recent measures by Utah and other states, such as "ban the box" initiatives, have taken necessary steps to disincentivize unnecessary discrimination based on an individual's status as an ex-offender;

WHEREAS, although these measures have helped some ex-offenders secure better employment outcomes, there is still an urgent need for employers to actively seek out ex-offenders;

WHEREAS, employers who hire ex-offenders may be able to receive fidelity bonds free of charge through the U.S. Department of Labor Federal Bonding Program;

WHEREAS, employers who hire ex-felons may be able to obtain a federal tax benefit under the federal Work Opportunity Tax Credit; and

WHEREAS, public entities have a unique opportunity to both set the example and utilize ex-offenders as a much-needed resource:

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of the State of Utah, the Governor concurring therein, recognizes that ex-offenders have paid their debt to society and many wish to be contributing members of the state's workforce.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislature of the State of Utah, the Governor concurring therein, encourages all public entities to take seriously the need to employ ex-offenders.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislature of the State of Utah, the Governor concurring therein, supports the employment of qualified ex-offenders by public entities.