



Tuesday, June 16, 2020

Dear members of the Special Committee on Access to the Civil Justice System,

We write in support of Senate Bill 288 (LC 28 9712S), legislation that helps returning citizens gain employment and fill open positions, while ensuring employers have appropriate liability protection. The Metro Atlanta Chamber supports expanding opportunities for individuals to have their records restricted and reducing barriers to employment and encourages the Special Committee on Access to the Civil Justice System to hear and pass SB 288.

Georgia employers are implementing policies and strategies to include more people with criminal records, but it is an onerous process. Many other states have enacted reforms that make it easier to hire individuals with criminal histories. In 2019, Oklahoma, Kentucky and Mississippi extended record restriction eligibility to include more felony charges; Missouri, Louisiana, North Carolina and Texas extended eligibility to include more misdemeanors. SB 288 will improve Georgia's record restriction laws, creating more opportunities for returning citizens and help fill Georgia jobs.

These reforms will not only reduce barriers to employment, but will also grow tax dollars, reduce crime and costs and helps our economy and our communities thrive. Unemployment is directly correlated to recidivism, which puts a strain on families and state resources. Recidivism costs Georgia taxpayers \$130 million annually¹ and a 1% reduction in recidivism could save Georgia \$6-7 million a year in reduced costs of incarceration².

By passing SB 288, we will further our efforts to keep Georgia the No. 1 state in the nation in which to do business and foster a more inclusive economy.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Marshall Guest".

Marshall Guest
Sr. Vice President, Public Policy, Business Climate

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Amy Lancaster-King".

Amy Lancaster-King
Director of Workforce Development

¹ Source: Ga Center for Opportunity

² Source: SAA