



# PRESS RELEASE

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## **Oregon House Votes to “Ban the Box”**

*House Bill 3025 will open the door to employment for those with prior arrests or convictions*

Job applicants in Oregon will no longer face what is, for many, a daunting question on applications: “Have you ever been arrested or convicted of a crime?”

Under [House Bill 3025](#), which passed the House 33-27, employers will be barred from including that box on their applications, giving those with a prior conviction or arrest a better shot at getting called back for an interview.

Rep. Rob Nosse (D-Portland), who carried the bill on the House floor, recounted the many stories that lawmakers heard from Oregonians looking for a shot to put their lives back together.

“All these Oregonians are asking for, is to have a fair chance to convince potential employers of why they are qualified for the job, and to be given the ability to explain what they can bring to an employer’s business,” says Rep. Rob Nosse (D-Portland). “Passing this bill means they won’t be faced with permanent discrimination because of something that represented the worst moment in their life.”

The bill doesn’t prevent employers from asking about criminal histories in the interview process, or requiring criminal background checks as a condition of employment. It will not override statutory restrictions on people with certain convictions that prohibit them from working with vulnerable populations, like children or the elderly or in financially sensitive employment.

What it does, however, is give these job seekers a chance to make the case for themselves to potential employers.

At the House Committee on Business and Labor [hearing](#) about this bill, Thi Vu introduced himself as “the world’s greatest uncle, along with being a student at Portland Community College and a full time employed member of society today.”

In his testimony, Vu said, “Banning the box will allow someone like me to get an interview so that I can show who I am today, not who I was. Potential employers can assess my qualifications for the job and I’m not immediately removed from the applicant pool because of my past mistakes.”

Studies have shown that those who answer truthfully on an application and reveal that they’ve been convicted of a crime get called back for an interview less than half as often as equally

qualified candidates. Where Ban the Box legislation and ordinances have passed, the call back rate for people who have committed felonies has jumped by as much as 60%.

“When people with prior convictions and arrests are continually denied the opportunity to interview for employment, let alone be offered a job, we are pushing them back towards their past criminal life,” says Rep. Carla Piluso (D-Gresham), who served as Gresham’s first female Chief of Police. “This bill is the best choice to make sure all of our constituents have a fair chance to get their foot in the door, and if successful, gain employment and a real shot at a stable future.”

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