



2016 Legislative Agenda HB1553 - Certificate of Restoration of Opportunity for People with Criminal History

Building safer and healthier communities through increased employment and housing opportunities and reduction of recidivism

One in five Washington adults has a criminal record. Over half of individuals releasing from prison – 8,000 per year in our state – recidivate and return to the criminal justice system. Another 25,000 Washington residents are on community supervision. A Certificate of Restoration of Opportunity (CROP) would reduce barriers to work or housing that stem from past criminal convictions by providing additional context to employers or landlords to encourage them to accept individuals who have achieved significant recovery but who still have criminal records.

DOORS TO OPPORTUNITY STAY CLOSED EVEN AFTER LEGAL OBLIGATIONS ARE MET

- In Washington more than 90 career paths are closed to people because of prior convictions – including fields as diverse as chemical dependency counselors, commercial fishing, barbers, and telephone solicitors.
- Criminal records often exclude people from housing for which they may otherwise qualify.

EMPLOYMENT AND HOUSING ARE KEY STABILIZING FACTORS IN RECOVERY

- Employment has been shown to reduce the recidivism rate by nearly two-thirds.
- Safe permanent housing has a significant positive impact on a person's capacity to achieve and maintain mental health and/or substance abuse recovery.

CROP PROVIDES EVIDENCE OF REHABILITATION AND GOOD STANDING

- A Certificate of Restoration of Opportunity would reduce barriers to work and housing that stem from past criminal convictions by providing additional context to employers or landlords to encourage them to accept individuals who have achieved significant recovery.
- The CROP would not hide a person's criminal history, but would provide along with legal history an official certification from a court that a person has maintained good standing and compliance and has achieved rehabilitation.
- CROP would provide people who have worked hard to achieve recovery and fulfill their obligations a chance to be productive taxpayers, to take care of their families and stay out of an extremely expensive criminal system.