

GETTING GEORGIANS BACK TO WORK

Opening Access to Occupational Licenses: SB 157



www.GJP.org

Georgia should reduce barriers that prevent qualified individuals from working in licensed fields. Many Georgians with an old or irrelevant criminal record are denied the opportunity to pursue a career. Reform will help Georgia meet workforce needs and allow rehabilitated individuals to move on from their past.

Georgia Justice Project has assisted thousands of Georgians with a record who are working hard to get a better job and support their families and has worked with legislators, businesses, and other stakeholders to successfully advocate for **22 changes to Georgia law** that reduce legal barriers to reentry. Occupational licensing reform is an essential next step to help Georgia employers access the Untapped Talent of the 4.5 million people with a Georgia criminal record.

Did you know?

1 in 7 jobs require an occupational license, including **1 in 4** of Georgia's high-demand jobs.



Uncertainty about how their record will be considered discourages workers from pursuing education for a licensed profession.



Georgians risk license denial even if their record is minor, old, or restricted and sealed.

Fair access to licensed jobs reduces recidivism. States with more barriers have higher recidivism.¹



Many qualified individuals are eager and ready to work.

Georgia Justice Project has worked with a diverse group of legislators and stakeholders to develop solutions (SB 157)

- 1 Allow Georgians to request a review of their record before they complete education and training for a license. Lack of clarity about what a board will consider discourages people from investing time and money to pursue their dream career.
- 2 Licensing boards should only consider relevant convictions that are recent or serious and have not been expunged or pardoned.
- 3 Basic due process provisions will allow boards to make informed decisions and ensure those who have invested time and resources to pursue a license will be heard.
- 4 Licensing boards should collect and release basic data about how applications are handled.

Want to learn more? Visit [GJP.org/advocacy](https://www.gjp.org/advocacy) or contact Wade Askew, Policy Manager at Wade@GJP.org or 404.827.0027 ext. 214

¹ *Turning shackles into bootstraps: Why occupational licensing reform is the missing piece of criminal justice reform.* Stephen Slivinski for the Center for the Study of Economic Liberty (2016); see also *Bridging the Divide: Licensing and Recidivism.* Vittorio Nastasi and Samuel R. Staley for the James Madison Institute (2019).