



MEMORANDUM TO: Members of Michigan House Regulatory Reform Committee

FROM: Peter Ruark, Senior Policy Analyst

DATE: May 21, 2019

SUBJECT: Support of HB 4488-4493, regarding eligibility requirements for certain licenses and regulations

The Michigan League for Public Policy is a nonpartisan policy institute dedicated to economic opportunity for all, and advocates for state-level policy that helps people and families with low incomes achieve economic security. All of the League's work is done through a racial equity lens.

The League asks you to support the package of bills HB 4488-4493 that would make it easier for returning citizens to obtain occupational licenses while preserving public safety. These bills would build on Governor Rick Snyder's executive action in 2018, which lifted blanket felony conviction bans from state licenses, by enumerating and clarifying the disqualifying criteria used in licensing determinations including the phrase "good moral character."

Being gainfully employed is one of the most important factors in reducing the chance of recidivism. The benefits of investing in helping the formerly incarcerated to thrive "on the outside" and avoid going back to prison are not only humanitarian, but also make fiscal sense. Imprisonment costs the state money—an average of \$37,000 per prisoner per year—and takes workers out of the labor pool, threatening their ability to become re-employed after finishing their sentences.

Removing barriers to occupational licensure to enable more formerly incarcerated individuals to become skilled workers is in the interest of taxpayers and employers as well as to the individuals and families who are directly affected.

Attached is a copy of the League's new report, [*Thriving on the Outside: How Michigan Can Help the Formerly Incarcerated Become Gainfully Employed*](#), which discusses policy options that Michigan can undertake to support returning citizens as they reintegrate into society, including removing barriers to occupational licensing. We hope you will read and consider the policy recommendations, and will be happy to answer any questions you may have.