

SUPPORT HB 217 (HA1)

Increasing Educational Opportunities for People with Criminal Records

Lead Sponsors: Representative Mary Flowers

THE PROBLEM: People with criminal records are being deterred from getting an education.

- The majority of colleges ask about an applicant's criminal record. But, asking this question has a chilling effect – discouraging individuals with criminal records from completing the application.
- With about 45% of Illinois adults having a criminal record, it is critical that we address this barrier to education.
- As of the Fall of 2018, the common application no longer asks about an applicant's criminal record.

THE SOLUTION: “Ban the box” in the higher education admissions process.

- Banning the box prevents higher education institutions from asking about or considering a person's criminal record for purposes of admission.
- Banning the box does not prohibit a college or university to consider a person's criminal record *after* admission, including for offering campus housing, participating in campus activities, or to provide career counseling.

Evidence shows that asking about a criminal record at admission does nothing to protect public safety, but seeing the “box” on school applications prevents individuals from trying to apply to higher education.

Higher education dramatically reduces recidivism and helps individuals build financially stable futures.