



SUPPORTING SMALL BUSINESSES AND CREATING SAFER COMMUNITIES

Illinois businesses are struggling to hire employees, and formerly incarcerated citizens often struggle to find employment, contributing to high rates of re-incarceration. The SAFER Communities program is a proactive and innovative way to support small businesses, create opportunities for formerly incarcerated people, improve public safety, and reduce the costs of recidivism. We are calling on policymakers to get this program implemented and funded this spring.

This program was initially introduced through House Bill 3418 and passed the Illinois House. While the legislation has strong support in the Senate, changes are needed so the program and funding can move past the finish line. The program provides wage subsidies for businesses that hire formerly incarcerated individuals and an increased tax credit for small businesses that hire returning citizens. The wage subsidies are transferrable and move with eligible employees. Both the wage subsidies and tax credits are reasonable and meaningful. This program will focus on businesses in disinvested communities.

SUPPORT FOR SMALL BUSINESSES

SMALL BUSINESS SUPPORT

Persistent labor shortages across industries continue to impact the operations of small businesses. The wage incentives and increased tax credits will help small businesses provide on-the-job training to returning citizens who have learned valuable skills while incarcerated. This can supplement the workforce and provide small businesses with the valued employees they need.



PUBLIC SAFETY

When individuals returning from incarceration become stably employed, their risk of recidivism drops by 62%. This legislation will reduce crime and improve public safety.

IMPROVE ILLINOIS ECONOMY

ILLINOIS ECONOMY

This program will support the Illinois economy by reducing the costs of reincarceration while generating long-term revenue through the taxes paid by formerly incarcerated individuals.

This bill provides wins for so many Illinois stakeholders on so many levels. Let's build bridges between small businesses and formerly incarcerated individuals. We need innovative solutions to address the economic pressures facing small businesses and are calling on policymakers to implement and fund this program.