

People Are Not Their Past – Support HB 2942

Oregon maintains a statutory list of criminal convictions that bar individuals from ever working in a K-12 setting. Currently that list includes violent crimes and crimes involving children as well as non-violent, non-person offenses. However, the latter come with the same stigma as the former.

By removing non-violent, non-person offenses from the existing statute, HB 2942 gives TSPC and ODE the ability to create a risk assessment tool and a process for evaluating applicants with such past convictions on a case-by-case basis, while still holding student safety as the number one goal.

What crimes are we talking about removing?

- Unlawful manufacturing within 1,000 feet of a school of: hydrocodone, methadone, oxycodone, heroin, methylenedioxymethamphetamine, cocaine, methamphetamine, and controlled substances
- Unlawful delivery within 1,000 feet of a school zone of: hydrocodone, methadone, oxycodone, heroin, methylenedioxymethamphetamine, cocaine, methamphetamine, and controlled substances
- Unlawful delivery of: hydrocodone, methadone, oxycodone, cocaine, and methamphetamine
- Prostitution

Why these crimes?

The above crimes are often highly-correlated with substance use disorders and/or poverty status. They are not violent offenses, nor are they crimes specifically targeted at children.

Will this put students at risk?

No. Our intent with the bill is that TSPC and school districts will continue to evaluate candidates in a manner that prioritizes student safety and errs toward caution, but they will be allowed to evaluate applicants previously banned from our schools. Our intent is not to have individuals who have been recently released from prison begin working with students immediately thereafter. Rather, our goal is for the licensing or hiring agencies to be able to consider things like amount of time since conviction, the applicant's life post-sentence, character references, etc. instead of being required to deny an applicant automatically based on the above offenses.

Will districts be required to hire someone with a past conviction?

No, our aim is to maintain local-level discretion over final hiring decisions. HB 2942 would not place any requirements on districts' hiring practices. It would simply allow more nuanced evaluation of applicants than current statute allows.

We believe that individuals can grow and transform their lives, successfully fight addiction, and lead a life of better choices. We do not believe that an individual who has been convicted of one of the above crimes and served their sentence should continue to pay for their crime indefinitely.

Please support HB 2942.