

December 2, 2019 - Governor's FOCUS Committee on Criminal Justice Reform
United Way of Central Iowa, 1111 9th Street, Des Moines, Iowa

The meeting was called to order at 11:02 a.m.

The roll was called. All committee members were present. John Koufos appeared by phone. A quorum of committee members was present.

Stephan Bayens made a motion to adopt the minutes for the November 20 meeting. The motion was seconded by Darius Potts. The minutes were adopted by voice vote.

Lt. Governor Gregg made opening remarks. He presented the committee with five draft potential recommendations from the committee's third meeting:

- Expand Workforce Reentry Services in Prisons
- "Second Chance Employer" Designation
 - The committee discussed giving contract priority to businesses that opt-in.
- Create a Value Process Map of Reentry in the Community
 - The committee recommended mapping the first 12 months after release.
- Ensure Reentering Citizens have Access to Mobility Services
 - The committee discussed differences in causes for suspension. Some members expressed an interest in identifying non-public safety reasons for driver's license suspensions.
- Conviction Review for Occupational Licensing
 - The committee discussed potential challenges of licensing boards having access to details of the offenses.
 - The committee discussed licensing boards providing conditional approval upon predetermination, and how that may incentivize treatment completion and good behavior.
 - The committee discussed at a minimum having the licensing boards able to give a definitive 'not eligible' predetermination.

Director Jim Kurtenbach, Department of Administrative Services, presented on the state policy to not ask about conviction records on the employment application.

- The committee discussed state positions that are barred from hiring someone with certain convictions and when that is addressed in the hiring process.

Maurice Emsellem, Director of Fair Chance Programs, National Employment Law Project, discussed the impact of initial employer inquiry as to conviction records on employment.

Vikrant Reddy from the Charles Koch Institute spoke about research exploring unintended consequences of "Ban the Box" policies.

Grace Call from Council of State Governments, Justice Center presented on collateral consequences of a conviction record related to employment and reforms to mitigate the impact.

Brad Hartkopf from the Iowa Association of Business and Industry expressed concerns for a private employer mandate to not ask about criminal history on the initial application.

David Walker, representing the NAACP, offered that an incremental approach to Fair Chance Employment was amenable. He suggested starting with all public employers.

Public comments:

- The committee heard an interest in distinguishing between types of driver's license suspensions, identifying those that are public safety related versus failure to pay fines and fees.

The committee assembled at 1:15 p.m. to participate in a reentry simulation hosted by United Way of Central Iowa.

The committee assembled at 2:36 p.m. to hear from Jacob Shepard, Richard Thornburg, Robert Pate, Lance Williams, Wayne Byrd, and Arthur Barbine about their experience with reentering society from prison.

- The committee discussed the importance of an individual's desire to change their life.

Public comments:

- The committee heard an interest in clearance of arrest record reform.
- The committee heard that employer education on discriminatory hiring practices was important.