

Governor Wolf ‘Bans the Box’ on State Employee Applications

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Harrisburg, PA – Governor Tom Wolf today announced a Fair-Chance hiring policy for state agencies that will remove the criminal conviction question, otherwise known as “banning the box,” from non-civil service employment applications for agencies under the governor’s jurisdiction.

“In Pennsylvania, we have a robust system of supervision and rehabilitative services that gives reentrants to the community all the tools they need to put their lives back on track, get the skills they need to get a job, and get moving again. But too often, one small checkmark can jeopardize the future that we all need them to pursue and reach,” Governor Wolf said. “Banning the box will allow prospective applicants with criminal records to be judged on their skills and qualifications and not solely on their criminal history, while preserving a hiring agency’s ability to appropriately screen applicants as part of the hiring process.”

The governor, speaking alongside Representative Jordan Harris at a drug and alcohol recovery facility in Philadelphia, said the policy reaffirms the Wolf Administration’s commitment to reducing barriers for Pennsylvanians who seek the opportunity to work and contribute to their communities, and recognizes that everyone should have a meaningful chance to compete for jobs in the commonwealth.

“I am happy to stand with Governor Wolf today to continue moving Pennsylvania forward with regards to criminal justice reform,” Rep. Harris said. “Today’s action will directly help people with criminal records gain access to employment through our state government.”

The new policy will be effective July 1, 2017 for non-civil service applicants. The Office of Administration will provide guidance and training to agencies prior to the implementation of the policy, and anticipates that the policy will be applied to civil service applicants by December 2017.

“I fully support the efforts of Rep. Harris and Governor Wolf on this critical issue,” said Senator Anthony Williams, who attended the announcement. “A conviction should not be a life sentence. We need to provide ex-offenders with a meaningful path to rehabilitation. Banning the box and Clean Slate legislation will help us do just that.”

“Individuals who have paid their debt to society and are committed to becoming productive, upstanding citizens face challenges due to their past, including seeking employment,” said Sen. Vincent Hughes, who has introduced “ban the box” legislation in the Senate. “This Fair-Chance Hiring Policy gives individuals the opportunity to seek good employment and continue on the right path. Additionally, removing this barrier in the job application process and giving individuals the opportunity to work helps to reduce recidivism, which will make communities safer. I applaud the governor for recognizing that folks deserve a second chance.”

Exceptions to the policy will be made for positions where a criminal conviction makes an applicant ineligible under law and for positions responsible for the safeguarding or security of people or property, law enforcement or those involving contact with vulnerable populations.

Agencies are to continue to use the EEOC guidelines in determining whether an applicant's criminal history affects their candidacy for the position they are seeking.

To view the full policy, click [here](#) (pdf).

<https://www.governor.pa.gov/gov-wolf-bans-the-box-on-state-employee-applications/>