



**Overland
Park
Chamber™**

To: Representative Fred Patton and Members of the House Judiciary Committee

From: Kevin Walker, Senior Vice President of Public Policy

Overland Park Chamber of Commerce

Date: 7 February 2022

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee. Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony in support of HB 2575. This bill provides for automatic expungement of criminal records in certain circumstances.

It is no secret to any of you that employers are facing unprecedented challenges in recruiting employees. This is not only an inconvenience, but also a financial burden. Without appropriate staffing levels, businesses are having trouble returning to full-scale operations. Unfilled orders, delivery delays and longer wait times are becoming the norm. While customers are understanding, these delays are increasingly frustrating and costly.

It was recently reported that there were 60,000 job openings in Kansas so the problem we face is not a small one. As such, this bill will not solve all our employment problems. However, we must do all we can to connect workers with employment opportunities and this bill is a step in the right direction.

The bill allows certain criminal records - largely for low-level offenses - to be automatically expunged. Further, the bill contains appropriate safeguards to ensure public safety. We think the legislation is an important step in helping someone with relatively minor charges and offenses in their background overcome a challenge in the hiring process. Additionally, making it through the hiring process is only one aspect of the challenges those with criminal records face. They may also face obstacles finding a place to live which can be another impediment to securing a job.

When a qualified job seeker connects with a willing employer the outcome can be beneficial for both parties. This bill removes a barrier to employment with appropriate safeguards and for those reasons we encourage you to support HB 2575.