



THE TEXAS STATE CHAMBER

TAB's purpose is to champion the best business climate in the world, unleashing the power of free enterprise to enhance lives for generations.

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May 8, 2023

House Higher Ed Committee

FOR SB 526 (West) relating to requiring prior approval by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board to offer a degree or certificate program to certain persons who are incarcerated or subject to involuntary civil commitment.

Chairman Keumpel and Committee Members,

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to testify today on behalf of the Texas Association of Business, which is the State Chamber of Commerce for Texas. TAB represents members across every industry sector and size, and our local chamber partners across the state.

I am here today to testify in support of SB 526, which establishes a framework to create a coordinated system of higher education programs to ensure that formerly incarcerated people can work in their chosen field as quickly as possible after release. TAB is a strong supporter of efforts that prioritize educational and vocational programs for incarcerated individuals, which are proven to reduce re-offending and increase workforce participation.

TAB supports second chance hiring and recently launched the Second Chance Employers Coalition, which is a network of businesses engaging in, or interested in, implementing second chance hiring practices.

We believe that education in the prison system will not only help fill the needs of our growing workforce, but provide individuals re-entering society the tools they need to take care of themselves, their families, and be productive members of society.

Thank you again for allowing me the opportunity to testify on behalf of the Texas Association of Business. On behalf of the business community, we appreciate your work and dedication to state of Texas and look forward to working with you on this issue and others. I am happy to answer any questions.

Thank you,

Megan Mauro
SVP, Policy & Advocacy
Texas Association of Business