



**TESTIMONY OF
CONNECTICUT HOSPITAL ASSOCIATION
SUBMITTED TO THE
COMMERCE COMMITTEE
Tuesday, February 22, 2022**

SB 101, An Act Concerning Workforce Development Programs For Incarcerated Persons And Persons Reentering The Community After Incarceration

The Connecticut Hospital Association (CHA) appreciates this opportunity to submit testimony concerning **SB 101, An Act Concerning Workforce Development Programs For Incarcerated Persons And Persons Reentering The Community After Incarceration**. CHA supports the bill.

Since early 2020, hospitals and health systems have been at the center of Connecticut's response to the COVID-19 public health emergency, acting as a vital partner with the state and our communities. Hospitals expanded critical care capacity, procured essential equipment and supplies, and stood up countless community COVID-19 testing locations. Hospitals have been an essential component of the statewide vaccine distribution plan including efforts to reach and serve historically under-resourced communities disproportionately affected by the virus. Through it all, hospitals and health systems have continued to provide high-quality care for everyone, regardless of ability to pay.

SB 101 requires the Commissioner of Economic and Community Development (DECD) to evaluate the effectiveness of the state's current workforce development programs for incarcerated persons and persons reentering the community after incarceration and to develop an employer toolkit to facilitate the employment of incarcerated persons prior to or immediately after release from incarceration.

CHA applauds the growing number of public and private sector organizations nationwide that are taking action to ensure that all Americans have the opportunity to succeed, including individuals who have had contact with the criminal justice system. When almost 70 million Americans—nearly one in three adults—have a criminal record, it is important to remove unnecessary barriers that may prevent these individuals from gaining access to employment, training, education, and other basic tools required for success in life. We are committed to providing individuals with criminal records, including formerly incarcerated individuals, a fair chance to participate in the American economy.¹

¹ From the Fair Chance Business Pledge, The White House, November 2015.

CHA has been working with the Connecticut NAACP to implement its One Million Jobs Campaign. The goal of this campaign is to find positions for qualified individuals who have had contact with the criminal justice system. A toolkit created by DECD would be extremely helpful to hospitals and others on this journey to hire justice-involved individuals.

This legislation will help make our communities stronger, safer, and healthier.

Thank you for your consideration of our position. For additional information, contact CHA Government Relations at (203) 294-7310.