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# A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO EMPLOYMENT DISCRIMINATION.

**BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:**

1           SECTION 1. The legislature finds that meaningful  
2 opportunities for gainful and legitimate employment are  
3 necessary for people with criminal records to achieve economic  
4 stability for themselves and their families. The legislature  
5 also finds that legitimate employment is significantly  
6 correlated with lower recidivism rates for individuals with past  
7 convictions and ensures more meaningful employment opportunities  
8 for people with criminal records that may be key to reducing  
9 crime and improving public safety in the long-term.

10           Unfortunately, a job applicant's criminal record, including  
11 their conviction history, can itself be a barrier to employment  
12 opportunities, as employers may have express or unconscious  
13 biases against hiring or retaining those with a record, even  
14 where those records are extremely old, for relatively minor  
15 crimes, or unrelated to specific employment opportunities.  
16 Recognizing this, the legislature was at the forefront of a  
17 national movement to pass "ban the box" legislation, which was



1 intended to address the employment hurdles that people with  
2 criminal records face. Hawaii's current "ban the box" law  
3 generally prohibits the use of arrest and court records as a  
4 basis for employment discrimination, subject to exceptions for  
5 certain occupations, and for the use of conviction records up to  
6 ten years old, if those records have a rational relationship to  
7 the duties and responsibilities of the position in question.

8       Unfortunately, Hawaii's current "ban the box" law, and  
9 specifically its ten-year conviction record "lookback  
10 exception", may continue to facilitate employment discrimination  
11 against individuals who have a criminal history, but who have  
12 long since paid their debt to society, and who pose little to no  
13 risk to an employer or the public. For example, employers may  
14 use conviction information they acquire in a ten-year background  
15 check explicitly allowed under the law to ostensibly justify  
16 discrimination against those with a conviction record,  
17 regardless of the age of the person's conviction or relevance to  
18 the job at hand. Even employers and human resource  
19 professionals with good intentions may be affected by  
20 unconscious biases and make adverse decisions against qualified  
21 employees and prospective employees who have a ten-year-old



1 record. Compounding this problem, background checks are often  
2 inaccurate, and can still show arrest and expunged records in  
3 conflict with what is currently allowed to be used under the  
4 existing statute; accordingly, even those who have not been  
5 convicted of a crime or who have had their records expunged may  
6 continue to face employment challenges as a result of the  
7 currently allowed ten-year "lookback period".

8       The legislature finds that the currently allowed ten-year  
9 lookback period for conviction records should be shortened to  
10 reduce unnecessary employment discrimination against those with  
11 old and relatively minor conviction records, in furtherance of  
12 their economic self-sufficiency, and to reduce crime and  
13 recidivism rates.

14       The purpose of this Act is to limit the convictions that  
15 may be used in employment decisions from all convictions in the  
16 most recent ten years, to felony convictions that occurred  
17 within a certain time period and misdemeanor convictions that  
18 occurred within a certain time period. This Act is not intended  
19 to amend or affect existing exceptions that explicitly allow the  
20 use of criminal history-related records for certain occupations



1 (such as department of education employees) and specific  
2 circumstances (such as sex offender registration).

3 SECTION 2. Section 378-2.5, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is  
4 amended by amending subsections (c) and (d) to read as follows:

5 "(c) For purposes of this section, "conviction" means an  
6 adjudication by a court of competent jurisdiction that the  
7 defendant committed a crime, not including final judgments  
8 required to be confidential pursuant to section 571-84; provided  
9 that the employer may consider the employee's conviction record  
10 falling within a period that shall not exceed the most recent  
11 [~~ten years,~~]                     years for felony convictions and  
12                     years for misdemeanor convictions, excluding periods  
13 of incarceration. If the employee or prospective employee  
14 claims that the period of incarceration was less than what is  
15 shown on the employee's or prospective employee's conviction  
16 record, an employer shall provide the employee or prospective  
17 employee with an opportunity to present documentary evidence of  
18 a date of release to establish a period of incarceration that is  
19 shorter than the sentence imposed for the employee's or  
20 prospective employee's conviction.



1 (d) Notwithstanding subsections (b) and (c), the  
2 requirement that inquiry into and consideration of a prospective  
3 employee's conviction record may take place only after the  
4 individual has received a conditional job offer, and the  
5 limitation to the most recent [~~ten-year period,~~] \_\_\_\_\_-year  
6 period for felony convictions and \_\_\_\_\_-year period for  
7 misdemeanor convictions, excluding the period of incarceration,  
8 shall not apply to employers who are expressly permitted to  
9 inquire into an individual's criminal history for employment  
10 purposes pursuant to any federal or state law other than  
11 subsection (a), including:

- 12 (1) The State or any of its branches, political  
13 subdivisions, or agencies pursuant to sections 78-2.7  
14 and 831-3.1;
- 15 (2) The department of education pursuant to section  
16 302A-601.5;
- 17 (3) The department of health with respect to employees,  
18 providers, or subcontractors in positions that place  
19 them in direct contact with clients when providing  
20 non-witnessed direct mental health services pursuant  
21 to section 321-171.5;



- 1 (4) The judiciary pursuant to section 571-34;
- 2 (5) The counties pursuant to section 846-2.7(b)(5), (33),  
3 (34), (35), (36), and (38);
- 4 (6) Armed security services pursuant to section 261-17(b);
- 5 (7) Providers of a developmental disabilities domiciliary  
6 home pursuant to section 321-15.2;
- 7 (8) Private schools pursuant to sections 302C-1 and  
8 378-3(8);
- 9 (9) Financial institutions in which deposits are insured  
10 by a federal agency having jurisdiction over the  
11 financial institution pursuant to section 378-3(9);
- 12 (10) Detective agencies and security guard agencies  
13 pursuant to sections 463-6(b) and 463-8(b);
- 14 (11) Employers in the business of insurance pursuant to  
15 section 431:2-201.3;
- 16 (12) Employers of individuals or supervisors of individuals  
17 responsible for screening passengers or property under  
18 title 49 United States Code section 44901 or  
19 individuals with unescorted access to an aircraft of  
20 an air carrier or foreign carrier or in a secured area



1 of an airport in the United States pursuant to title  
2 49 United States Code section 44936(a);

3 (13) The department of human services pursuant to sections  
4 346-97 and 352-5.5;

5 (14) The public library system pursuant to section  
6 302A-601.5;

7 (15) The department of public safety pursuant to section  
8 353C-5;

9 (16) The board of directors of a cooperative housing  
10 corporation or the manager of a cooperative housing  
11 project pursuant to section 421I-12;

12 (17) The board of directors of an association under chapter  
13 514B, or the managing agent or resident manager of a  
14 condominium pursuant to section 514B-133; and

15 (18) The department of health pursuant to section  
16 321-15.2."

17 SECTION 3. Statutory material to be repealed is bracketed  
18 and stricken. New statutory material is underscored.

19 SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect on January 1, 2050.



**Report Title:**

OHA Package; Employment Discrimination; Criminal History

**Description:**

Limits the convictions that may be used in employment decisions from all convictions in the most recent ten years to felony convictions that occurred in a certain time period and misdemeanor convictions that occurred in a certain time period. Takes effect on 1/1/2050. (HD1)

*The summary description of legislation appearing on this page is for informational purposes only and is not legislation or evidence of legislative intent.*

