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**SECOND SUBSTITUTE HOUSE BILL 1701**

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**State of Washington 64th Legislature 2016 Regular Session**

**By** House Labor & Workplace Standards (originally sponsored by Representatives Moscoso, Walsh, Haler, Jinkins, Reykdal, S. Hunt, Blake, Riccelli, Ortiz-Self, Walkinshaw, Tharinger, Appleton, Sells, Gregerson, Santos, Farrell, and Ormsby)

AN ACT Relating to prohibiting employers from asking about arrests or convictions before an applicant is determined otherwise qualified for a position; adding a new chapter to Title 49 RCW; and prescribing penalties.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  The definitions in this section apply throughout this chapter unless the context clearly requires otherwise.

(1) "Criminal record" includes any record about a citation or arrest for criminal conduct, including records relating to probable cause to arrest, and includes any record about a criminal or juvenile case filed with any court, whether or not such case resulted in a finding of guilt.

(2) "Employer" includes public agencies, private individuals, businesses and corporations, contractors, temporary staffing agencies, training and apprenticeship programs, and job placement, referral, and employment agencies.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  (1) It is unlawful for an employer to exclude an applicant from an initial interview solely because of a criminal record as defined in section 1 of this act.

(2) An employer excludes an applicant from an initial interview if the employer:

(a) Requires an applicant to disclose on an employment application a criminal record;

(b) Requires an applicant to disclose, prior to an initial interview, a criminal record;

(c) Relies on a criminal background check to exclude an applicant from an initial interview; or

(d) If no interview is conducted, requires an applicant to disclose, prior to making a conditional offer of employment, a criminal record.

(3) It is unlawful for an employer to advertise employment openings in a way that excludes people with a criminal record from applying. Advertising that states "no felons," "no criminal background," or otherwise conveying similar messages are prohibited.

(4) Subject to subsections (1) and (2) of this section and any other applicable law or regulation, nothing in this section prohibits an employer from considering an applicant's criminal record prior to making a hiring decision.

(5) Subsections (1), (2), and (3) of this section do not apply:

(a) If federal or state law, including corresponding rules and regulations, requires the consideration of an applicant's criminal record;

(b) To an employer that is a law enforcement agency as defined in RCW 10.93.020;

(c) To an employer in the criminal justice system;

(d) To an employer hiring a person who will have unsupervised access to children under the age of eighteen, a vulnerable adult as defined in chapter 74.34 RCW, or a vulnerable person as defined in RCW 9.96A.060; or

(e) To an employer seeking a nonemployee volunteer.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  (1) This chapter may not be construed to interfere with, impede, or in any way diminish any provision in a collective bargaining agreement or the right of employees to bargain collectively with their employers through representatives of their own choosing concerning wages, standards, and conditions of employment.

(2) This chapter may not be interpreted or applied to diminish or conflict with any requirements of state or federal law, including Title VII of the civil rights act of 1964; the federal fair credit reporting act, 15 U.S.C. Sec. 1681; the Washington state fair credit reporting act, chapter 19.182 RCW; and state laws regarding unsupervised access to children or vulnerable persons, RCW 43.43.830 through 43.43.845.

(3) This chapter may not be interpreted or applied as imposing an obligation on the part of an employer to provide accommodations or job modifications in order to facilitate the employment or continued employment of an applicant or employee with a criminal record or who is facing pending criminal charges.

(4) This chapter may not be construed to discourage or prohibit an employer from adopting employment policies that are more protective of employees and job applicants than the requirements of this chapter.

(5) This chapter may not be construed to interfere with local government laws that provide additional protections to applicants or employees with criminal records, nor does it prohibit local governments from enacting greater protections for such applicants or employees in the future. Local government laws that provide lesser protections to job applicants with criminal records than this chapter conflict with this chapter and may not be enforced.

(6) This chapter may not be construed to create a private right of action to seek damages or remedies of any kind. The exclusive remedy available under this chapter is enforcement described in section 4 of this act. This chapter does not create any additional liability for employers beyond that enumerated in this chapter.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  (1) The state attorney general's office shall enforce this chapter. Its powers to enforce this chapter include the authority to:

(a) Investigate violations of this chapter on its own initiative;

(b) Investigate violations of this chapter in response to complaints and seek remedial relief for the complainant;

(c) Educate the public about how to comply with this chapter;

(d) Issue written civil investigative demands for pertinent documents, answers to written interrogatories, or oral testimony as required to enforce this chapter;

(e) Adopt rules implementing this chapter including rules specifying applicable penalties; and

(f) Pursue administrative sanctions or a lawsuit in the courts for penalties, costs, and attorneys' fees.

(2) In exercising its powers, the attorney general's office shall utilize a stepped enforcement approach, by first educating violators, then warning them, then taking legal, including administrative, action. Maximum penalties are as follows: A notice of violation and offer of agency assistance for the first violation; a monetary penalty of up to seven hundred fifty dollars for the second violation; and a monetary penalty of up to one thousand dollars for each subsequent violation.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  If any provision of this act or its application to any person or circumstance is held invalid, the remainder of the act or the application of the provision to other persons or circumstances is not affected.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  If any part of this act is found to be in conflict with federal requirements that are a prescribed condition to the allocation of federal funds to the state, the conflicting part of this act is inoperative solely to the extent of the conflict and with respect to the agencies directly affected, and this finding does not affect the operation of the remainder of this act in its application to the agencies concerned. Rules adopted under this act must meet federal requirements that are a necessary condition to the receipt of federal funds by the state.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  Sections 1 through 4, 6, and 8 of this act constitute a new chapter in Title 49 RCW.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  This act may be known and cited as the Washington fair chance act.

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