



Patricia Coldeen, in support of HB 3025
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Chair Holvey and members of the committee,

My name is Patricia Coldeen. I am presently a student in the University of Oregon's Family and Human Services program. I have earned an Associates of Arts from Lane Community College and I am a certified drug and alcohol counselor through the state of Oregon. I have worked part-time as a counselor at Willamette Family drug treatment program and I volunteer with the non-profit organization Partnership for Safety and Justice, where I help to make Oregon's approach to public safety more effective and just. I also enjoy trail running, camping and I enjoy supporting Eugene's local musicians. I am currently employed at Jacksons Foods and have been since February of 2008.

Due to an untreated drug addiction, I was arrested and in 2007 I finally got the drug treatment I so desperately needed. However, as a formally incarcerated person with felonies, I had to overcome many obstacles that obstructed a successful integration back into the community. One of the biggest barriers to my success was finding gainful employment.

While incarcerated I was able to participate in a treatment program in which I took responsibly for my own actions and I made a commitment to change. For the first time in many years, I felt positive and hopeful for my future. It wasn't long however, those hopes diminished.

I began feeling discouraged when door after door of employment opportunity closed on me, all because of the question on the application; have you ever been convicted of a felony? I knew if I checked that box the application would be discarded. I worked so hard to address my addiction issues, change my thought processes, and change my life and then only to be told I was still not employable. It was difficult at times to persevere. I was one of the lucky ones. With the help and support of family and friends, and many months of not giving up, I was finally able to find an employer that was willing to give me a chance. I have been with them ever since.

Because Jackson's food was willing to give me a chance I was able to begin this journey of healing and taking accountability for myself. I have worked for this company now for over 6 years. I feel it is my responsibility not only to work hard for them to show my gratitude, but to also ensure that they continue the practice of giving people like me a chance by making sure they do not ever regret having hired me. I always receive stellar reviews and I am told I am a valued employee.

I am asking today to please support A Fair Chance for All and *ban the box* that often eliminates qualified people from getting a opportunity for employment. When a community comes together to support its members, everyone benefits.