



To: Oregon Senate Workforce Committee
From: Shyra Wade, 3734 NE 109th Ave., Portland, OR 97220
Re: Ban the Box Legislation, HB 3025
Date: May 18, 2015

My name is Shyra Wade; I am a member of PFLAG Black Chapter. I am writing to extend my strong support for HB 3025, to ban the box on employment applications in Oregon.

I am currently employed at NARA Treatment Center and a full-time student at Portland Community College, where I am studying to be a Drug and Alcohol Counselor. I am also in Recovery.

I have not always lived a life I could be proud of. I've made decisions in my past that has placed great barriers in my path today. At the time I really didn't know any better, living that lifestyle was all I knew. Being a member of the minority community and living below poverty I couldn't always see past the challenges that were in front of me every day.

When I was in my 20s, I got into some trouble with the law and had to spend a couple months in jail. Once I was convicted I was given a suspended sentence, as long as I completed drug and alcohol treatment and successfully completed my probation. However, I was stuck with a few felonies that have followed me around ever since this time. Having a record does not make me a bad person; it just says that I have made some poor choices in my past. My record has no bearing on my character or the person I am today.

Now that I am in recovery and doing what I can to be a part of a community, that contributes to the greater good. I am still being judged and disregarded on paper before I am even given the chance to shake a hand or have a conversation with somebody, when I am either applying for a job or a place to live.

Having these felonies on my record has made it very challenging for me to find a good job. I've applied for jobs that I have experience in and know I would excel in, but because of my record a lot of times was never even called back for an interview. I spent a long time searching for a job on my own with no results. It wasn't until I went through Vocational Rehabilitation that I was given the opportunity to show I am a good employee with strong work ethic.

Having to check that box is hindrance to people who are making strides to become a productive member of society, because of that box doors are being closed before we are even given a chance. I'm not saying that everyone is going to be a good fit for just any situation, but at least give us the opportunity to have a meaningful interaction before coming to that conclusion. It is not fair or just to base that decision on what is marked on a piece of paper.

We all deserve a fair chance and that is why it is important and necessary to ban the box.

Thank you for the opportunity to share part of my story. Please pass HB 3025 to give me and others a second chance at success.