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Delaware to Become 12th State to Endorse Fair Hiring of People with Records

*Georgia could be next state to give qualified applicants with
convictions a fair chance to work*

Washington, DC—Delaware Governor Jack Markell is expected to sign bipartisan legislation Thursday afternoon known as “ban the box,” making Delaware the 12th state in the nation to remove questions about an applicant’s criminal record from government job applications. Earlier this year in his [state of the state address](#), the governor called on Delaware to adopt the policy and “be a model for the private sector, because marginalizing ex-offenders helps none of us.”

This latest win in the movement for fair-hiring policies follows on the heels of recent victories in the Midwest. In April, Republican Governor Dave Heineman of Nebraska signed into law a criminal justice reform bill that included a provision postponing conviction inquiries so that job-seekers can be reviewed on their qualifications first. And this week in Michigan, [Genesee County](#) and [Ann Arbor](#) both unanimously adopted policies removing conviction questions from government job applications.

In the South, Republican Governor Nathan Deal of Georgia has pledged to issue an executive order offering job applicants with records a fair chance to be judged on their merits, not just their records. The governor’s spokesperson told the [Times-Herald](#): “The governor will implement ban the box on the state level, and hope that the private sector follows suit. This will afford those with blemishes on their record a shot at a good job, which is key to preventing a return to crime.”

Other jurisdictions are taking action to reduce unnecessary job barriers in the private sector. Last week, the Baltimore City Council [approved](#) a measure applying ban-the-box to private employers. In New York City, the NYC Fair Chance Act, a [similar measure](#) applying to all employers, was introduced last week with strong support in the City Council. And in Illinois, a bill applying to private employers recently passed the house and will be taken up by the state senate.

“The tally of jurisdictions that are standing up for a fair chance for all job-seekers is up to [12 states](#) and over [60 cities and counties](#). The broad support shows that we are finding common ground in ways that strengthen our economy,” said **Christine Owens, executive director of the National Employment Law Project**. Besides the pending executive order in Georgia and the bill in Illinois, legislation was introduced this year in Florida, South Carolina, New Hampshire, and New Jersey.

To help advocates and policymakers tap into this national momentum and initiate fair-chance campaigns in their communities, NELP has released a [new comprehensive online toolkit](#). It includes best practices, sample public education materials, model legislative language, media coverage, and other campaign resources.

The National Employment Law Project is a non-partisan, not-for-profit organization that conducts research and advocates on issues affecting low-wage and unemployed workers. For more about NELP, visit www.nelp.org.

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