



January 12, 2026

The Honorable Jon Burns  
Speaker  
HM-1 State Capitol  
Atlanta, Georgia 30334

*RE: Support for SB 207 Professions and Businesses; a preclearance process in the licensing of individuals with criminal records who make application to or are investigated by certain licensing boards and commissions; create.*

Dear Speaker Burns:

As a representative of Georgia's 1.3 million small businesses, Small Business Majority encourages you to bring SB 207, legislation that would improve the process for obtaining an occupational license in Georgia, to the House floor for a vote.

Georgia is a great place to live, work and own a small business; however, many small employers in our state are facing an ongoing talent shortage. Small Business Majority's [polling](#) found that nearly 6 in 10 Georgia small businesses (59%) say the top challenge they face when hiring new employees is finding quality candidates. Given the tight labor market, it is essential that we keep growing our workforce and strengthening our economy so that Georgia's small businesses can access a diverse and strong talent pool.

Labor shortages are exacerbated by the fact that nearly [one in five](#) jobs in Georgia require an occupational license, including 25% of [Georgia's high-demand jobs](#). Meanwhile, more than [4.5 million](#) Georgians have a criminal record, which is a barrier to obtaining an occupational license, no matter how long ago an arrest or conviction took place or whether it has been pardoned or expunged. Even when a person is well-qualified and motivated to work, uncertainty may discourage them from pursuing licensed career paths.

This legislation would help Georgia follow the lead of other southern states by giving all Georgians a fair chance, while also expanding Georgia's skilled workforce. The bill would create a predetermination process so people with records can learn if their record is disqualifying before pursuing education and training and ensure boards only consider relevant convictions that are recent or serious and have not been expunged or pardoned. It would also protect due process so applicants feel heard and have a meaningful path to review decisions and require boards to capture basic data about licensing applications.

We should create opportunities for our neighbors who have paid their debt to society and are willing and eager to work. Making it easier for them to obtain an occupational license will reduce recidivism and make it easier for them to start or work for a small business. The small business community supports this; [86%](#) of Georgia small business owners says they would support reforms that would allow people with prior criminal records fairer access to occupational licenses.

By passing this bill, we would open access to occupational licensing to address the ongoing labor shortage and create opportunities for entrepreneurship. We urge you to advance this legislation during the current session and add SB 207 to the agenda for a house floor vote.

Sincerely,

Rachel Shanklin  
Georgia Director  
Small Business Majority

CC:

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