

February 10, 2025

The Honorable Ted Davis
Chairman
House Committee on Judiciary 1
300 North Salisbury Street
Raleigh, NC 27603

The Honorable Hugh Blackwell
Vice Chairman
House Committee on Judiciary 1
300 North Salisbury Street
Raleigh, NC 27603

RE: Support of House Bill 45, GSC Moral Turpitude/Occupational Licensure.

Dear Chairman Davis, Vice-Chairman Blackwell, and Members of the Committee:

As a representative of North Carolina's 1 million small businesses, Small Business Majority writes today in support of HB 45, legislation that will give North Carolinians a fair chance and help expand our state's skilled workforce by making it easier for entrepreneurs and jobseekers to obtain occupational licenses.

Small Business Majority is a small business organization that empowers diverse entrepreneurs to build a thriving and equitable economy. We engage our network of more than 85,000 small businesses and 1,500 business and community organizations to advocate for public policy solutions and deliver resources to entrepreneurs that promote equitable small business growth.

More than [two million North Carolinians](#), or 1 in 4, have criminal records in the state. One essential way those reentering can avoid returning to prison is through entrepreneurship, which provides individuals with not only long-term sustainable wealth, but a way to give back to their communities. However, with nearly [4% of small business owners](#) having some type of criminal record, they face significant barriers in accessing the tools and required licensure to successfully start and grow their business.

That's why we support H 45, which would remove "moral turpitude" as a creation of license denial, focusing instead on the relevance of criminal convictions to professional duties, and standardizing disciplinary actions across various professions. This will allow individuals seeking licensure to start and grow their business based on their qualifications. Furthermore, small business owners support policy solutions which make it easier for justice-impacted individuals to access occupational or professional licensing. A [vast 83% of small business owners](#) in North Carolina say they would support reforms that would allow people with criminal records fairer access to occupational licenses. More than 8 in 10 (81%) say state licensing boards should consider the nature of the offense when deciding whether to deny a license, rather denying a license broadly for any felony conviction.

We urge the Committee to move forward and pass House Bill 45 to support small businesses across the state.

Sincerely,

Awesta Sarkash
North Carolina Director
Small Business Majority