



**STATEMENT FOR THE RECORD BEFORE THE COLORADO HOUSE BUSINESS
AFFAIRS AND LABOR COMMITTEE ON HB 24-1004: EX-OFFENDERS
PRACTICE IN REGULATED OCCUPATIONS**

February 15, 2024
Lindsey Vigoda, Colorado Director
Small Business Majority

Thank you, Chairwoman Amabile and members of the Committee:

My name is Lindsey Vigoda and I'm the Colorado Director for Small Business Majority, a small business organization with a mission to empower America's diverse entrepreneurs to build a thriving and equitable economy. I'm pleased to provide testimony in support of House Bill 24-1004, legislation concerning justice-impacted individuals' ability to receive authorization to work in state-regulated occupations. This is a significant proposal that will help support aspiring entrepreneurs and workers with previous criminal records, as they start and work at small businesses, increasing their economic opportunities and independence.

As representative of Colorado's nearly 685,000 small businesses, Small Business Majority is deeply concerned about the ongoing workforce shortage in the state. In fact, a [recent analysis](#) by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce reveals a concerning trend: Colorado has one of the more severe worker shortage indexes in the country, with only 52 available workers for every 100 open jobs. This problem is compounded by the fact that [1 in 6 Colorado workers](#) must now get an occupational license before they can legally do their jobs.

We're encouraged to see proposals such as House Bill 24-1004 because it will help remove barriers for justice-impacted individuals to participate in the workforce and even start businesses. What's more, small business owners are supportive of this type of proposal. A [Small Business Majority survey](#) found that 83% of small business owners agree that one way to expand the productivity and diversity of our nation's workforce is by making it easier for employers to recruit from an underused candidate pool. This resonates with many small businesses, as they often hire contractors and other workers with specific credentials and professional licenses in fields like construction or hairdressing. Additionally, the same survey found that 79% of small businesses would support reforms that would allow people with old convictions fairer access to occupational licenses.

We appreciate the opportunity to weigh in on this important issue and urge you to pass this bill to help remove barriers to occupational licenses for justice-impacted individuals, and increase workforce participation during a critical time for our small business owners. Their contributions are valuable to our state and our small businesses.

Sincerely,

Lindsey Vigoda
Colorado Director
Small Business Majority