



March 7, 2025

The Honorable Glenn Youngkin
Governor of Virginia
111 E. Broad Street
Richmond, VA 23219

RE: Small business support for SB 826, Predetermination for licensing eligibility; prior convictions.

Dear Governor Youngkin,

As a representative of Virginia's small business community, Small Business Majority writes today to urge you to sign SB 826, Predetermination for licensing eligibility; prior convictions. This bill would provide much-needed clarity and fairness in Virginia's occupational licensing laws by ensuring that entrepreneurs with prior convictions are not unfairly denied a license to work in their chosen profession.

Unfair occupational licensing laws often make it harder for individuals who are trying to start and grow their business. Entrepreneurs with records have already served their time and getting their licenses to become a business owner demonstrates rehabilitation and attempts at seeking stable employment. By restricting access to these licenses, these laws not only harm entrepreneurs but also deprive Virginia's local economies and reduce skilled workforces.

SB 826 would also build upon national best practices by creating a predetermination process by which potential applicants with a prior criminal record can request a decision from a licensing board as to whether their specific criminal history would disqualify them from obtaining a license, before incurring potentially significant costs associated with education or training.

This bill also removes remaining references to outdated terms like "moral turpitude", ensuring that adverse licensing decisions are based on specific criminal history directly related to the profession into which entry is sought. And crucially, SB 826 applies the state's standards for considering criminal records in licensure to healthcare occupations. Data from other states shows that returning citizens are interested in working in health-care-related fields, especially nursing, and can obtain licenses and work safely in these fields. This reform can also help address labor shortages in healthcare, which is an enormously important issue to small businesses.

The Virginia General Assembly passed the bill unanimously because they know that Virginia's entrepreneurial ecosystem would benefit from this legislation. We encourage you to sign SB 826 into law.

Sincerely,

Awesta Sarkash
Public Policy Director
Small Business Majority