



**House Judiciary Reported Substitute for HB238**

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A BILL  
TO BE ENTITLED  
AN ACT

Relating to eligibility for employment of convicted individuals; to amend Sections 12-26-7, 12-26-9, 41-9A-1, and 41-9A-2, Code of Alabama 1975; to add Section 41-9A-2.1 to the Code of Alabama 1975; to create a presumption of fitness for occupational licensure in certain circumstances; to provide immunity to employers in certain circumstances that hire individuals granted an order of limited relief; to provide further for the process under which an occupational licensing board may disqualify an individual convicted of a crime from obtaining a license to practice a profession or occupation; to require the Board of Pardons and Paroles to create a certificate of employability to be issued to certain individuals upon their release on parole from the Department of Corrections; and to provide immunity to employers in certain circumstances that hire individuals who have been issued certificates of employability.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF ALABAMA:

Section 1. Sections 12-26-7, 12-26-9, 41-9A-1, and 41-9A-2, Code of Alabama 1975, are amended to read as follows:

"§12-26-7



## House Judiciary Reported Substitute for HB238

29 (a) A petition to obtain an order of limited relief  
30 shall include a sworn statement made under penalty of perjury  
31 by the petitioner stating all of the following:

32 (1) That the petitioner is not subject to the  
33 limitations in Section 12-26-6 and is eligible to seek an  
34 order of limited relief.

35 (2) Whether the petitioner has previously applied for  
36 an order of limited relief in any jurisdiction and whether an  
37 order has been granted previously.

38 (3) A list specifying ~~the~~ any convictions and  
39 collateral consequences to which the order should apply.

40 (b) Once a petition has been filed, the circuit clerk  
41 ~~shall serve the petition on the occupational licensing board,~~  
42 ~~as defined in Section 41-9A-1, or other entity responsible for~~  
43 ~~the collateral consequence that the petitioner is seeking~~  
44 ~~relief from. Once service is made, the court~~ shall review  
45 available presentence and other reports on the defendant and  
46 may order a postsentence report to be completed by the Board  
47 of Pardons and Paroles or by the Commissioner of the  
48 Department of Corrections. The postsentence report shall  
49 contain information required by the court, which may include,  
50 but not be limited to, any of the following:

51 (1) A statement of the offense or offenses and  
52 surrounding circumstances.

53 (2) A statement of the petitioner's criminal and  
54 juvenile record.

55 (3) A record of previous applications for orders of  
56 limited relief.



## House Judiciary Reported Substitute for HB238

57 (4) A statement of the petitioner's medical and  
58 psychological history, if available.

59 (5) A statement of the petitioner's history while under  
60 the custody of the Department of Corrections, if any.

61 (6) Any previous probation or sentencing reports  
62 prepared by the Board of Pardons and Paroles.

63 (c) Upon completion, the Board of Pardons and Paroles  
64 shall provide copies of the postsentence report to the court  
65 and to either the petitioner's attorney or the petitioner, if  
66 not represented by an attorney.

67 (d) When a petitioner seeks relief from a conviction  
68 from a jurisdiction other than this state, the circuit court  
69 may require the petitioner to have additional documentation  
70 sent from that jurisdiction, including, but not limited to,  
71 any of the following:

72 (1) Any orders of limited relief, Certificates of  
73 Relief from Disabilities, Certificates of Rehabilitation, or  
74 similar documents issued by that jurisdiction.

75 (2) Any transcripts or other court records.

76 (3) Any sentencing reports, probation records, or  
77 similar documents.

78 (4) Any other available documentation necessary in  
79 considering the merits of the petition.

80 (e) Filing a petition for an order of limited relief  
81 shall constitute a waiver of privilege for any parole or  
82 probation records related to the offenses for which the  
83 petition is filed.

84 (f) Following a ruling by the court on the petition,



## House Judiciary Reported Substitute for HB238

85 any filed parole or probation records or other material that  
86 is otherwise subject to privilege shall be considered  
87 confidential.

88 (g) An individual required to register as a sex  
89 offender pursuant to Chapter 20A of Title 15 or convicted of a  
90 violent offense as defined in Section 12-25-32 is ineligible  
91 to obtain an order of limited relief."

92 "§12-26-9

93 (a) The circuit court shall rule on the merits of the  
94 petition in accordance with subsection (d) within 90 calendar  
95 days of the date the petition was filed. The court, for good  
96 cause, may extend the time within which it must rule on the  
97 petition by order entered prior to the expiration of the  
98 initial 90-day period.

99 (b) If the court determines that a hearing is not  
100 necessary, the court may rule without a hearing.

101 (c) If a hearing is held, the hearing shall be  
102 conducted in a manner prescribed by the trial judge and may  
103 include oral argument and review of relevant documentation in  
104 support of, or in objection to, the granting of the petition.  
105 Leave of the court shall be obtained for the taking of witness  
106 testimony relating to any disputed fact.

107 (d) In ruling on the petition, the court may consider  
108 the following factors, in addition to the information  
109 contained in the postsentence report:

110 (1) The nature and seriousness of the offense.

111 (2) The circumstances under which the offense occurred.

112 (3) Whether the offense or offenses for which the order



## House Judiciary Reported Substitute for HB238

113 is sought were the result of an isolated instance or a pattern  
114 of conduct.

115 (4) The relationship between the offense and collateral  
116 consequence or consequences from which the petitioner seeks  
117 relief.

118 (5) Available probation or parole records, reports, or  
119 recommendations.

120 (6) Evidence of previous orders of limited relief  
121 granted to the petitioner or prior expungement of the  
122 petitioner's record.

123 (7) Any other matter the court deems relevant.

124 (e) The court shall grant the petition if it is  
125 reasonably satisfied from the evidence that granting the  
126 petition will materially assist the petitioner in obtaining or  
127 maintaining employment and in living a law-abiding life, and  
128 will not pose an unreasonable risk to the safety or welfare of  
129 the public or any individual.

130 (f) There is no right to an order of limited relief,  
131 and any request for such an order may be denied at the sole  
132 discretion of the court.

133 (g) The ruling of the court shall be subject to direct  
134 appeal to the Alabama Court of Civil Appeals and shall not be  
135 reversed absent a showing of an abuse of discretion.

136 (h) When the court grants a petition for an order of  
137 limited relief, the petitioner shall be entitled to three  
138 copies of the order from the clerk's office.

139 (i) When an order of limited relief is granted, an  
140 occupational licensing board, as defined in Section 41-9A-1,



## House Judiciary Reported Substitute for HB238

141 may still consider the conduct underlying the conviction upon  
142 which the order was granted ~~in determining whether to deny,~~  
143 ~~revoke, or suspend a license,~~ but the order of limited relief  
144 shall create a presumption of rehabilitation and fitness for  
145 obtaining a license as defined in Section 41-9A-1.

146 (j) In a judicial or administrative proceeding alleging  
147 negligent hiring, an order of limited relief granted to an  
148 individual pursuant to this section may be introduced as  
149 evidence of a person's due care in hiring that individual if  
150 the person knew of the order of limited relief at the time of  
151 the alleged negligent hiring.

152 (k) In any proceeding on a claim against an employer  
153 for negligent hiring based upon the prior conviction of an  
154 employee, an order of limited relief granted to the employee  
155 pursuant to this section shall provide immunity for the  
156 employer with respect to the claim of negligent hiring if the  
157 employer knew of the order of limited relief at the time of  
158 the alleged negligent hiring. This subsection does not provide  
159 immunity to the employer for other claims related to the  
160 conduct of the employee.

161 (1) An employer who hires an individual who has been  
162 granted an order of limited relief is subject to suit in a  
163 civil action based on or relating to the retention of the  
164 individual as an employee only if:

165 (1) The individual, after being hired, demonstrates a  
166 danger to others or is subsequently convicted of a felony; and

167 (2) The individual is retained by the employer after  
168 the demonstration of danger to others or a subsequent



## House Judiciary Reported Substitute for HB238

169 conviction that is substantially similar to the conduct  
170 resulting in the prior conviction upon which the order of  
171 limited relief was granted."

172 "§41-9A-1

173 As used in this chapter, the following terms have the  
174 following meanings:

175 (1) LICENSE. Any license, certificate, or other  
176 evidence of qualification that an individual is required to  
177 obtain before he or she may engage in or represent himself or  
178 herself to be a member of a particular profession or  
179 occupation. The term does not include certification by the  
180 Alabama Peace Officers' Standards and Training Commission or  
181 driver licenses.

182 (2) OCCUPATIONAL LICENSING BOARD. Any state board,  
183 agency, commission, or other entity in this state that is  
184 established for the primary purpose of regulating the entry of  
185 individuals into, or the conduct of individuals within, or  
186 both, a particular profession or occupation, and that is  
187 authorized to issue licenses. The term does not include any  
188 state agency staffed by full-time state employees that, as a  
189 part of its regular functions, may issue licenses and does not  
190 include a board governed by Chapter 9 or Chapter 24 of Title  
191 34."

192 "§41-9A-2

193 (a) Notwithstanding any other law to the contrary, an  
194 occupational licensing board shall not deny an application for  
195 a license due to any of the following:

196 (1) A criminal conviction that is not directly related



## House Judiciary Reported Substitute for HB238

197 to the duties and responsibilities of the profession or  
198 occupation for which the license is required.

199 (2) A criminal conviction that has been pardoned,  
200 sealed, expunged, or otherwise nullified or made confidential  
201 by the jurisdiction from which it originated.

202 (3) An arrest that did not result in a criminal  
203 conviction and for which criminal charges are not currently  
204 pending.

205 (4) An applicant's lack of "good moral character" or  
206 failure to adhere to any similarly vague or generic standard.

207 (b) In determining whether a criminal conviction is  
208 directly related to the duties and responsibilities of the  
209 profession or occupation for which a license is required, an  
210 occupational licensing board shall consider all of the  
211 following factors on a case-by-case basis:

212 (1) The nature and seriousness of the crime for which  
213 the individual was convicted.

214 (2) The nature of the specific duties and  
215 responsibilities for which the license is required.

216 (3) The age of the individual at the time of the  
217 commission of the crime.

218 (4) The passage of time since the commission of the  
219 crime.

220 (5) Any evidence of rehabilitation or treatment  
221 undertaken by the individual that might mitigate the direct  
222 relationship between the criminal conviction and the duties  
223 and responsibilities of the profession or occupation sought.

224 (c) An occupational licensing board that makes





## House Judiciary Reported Substitute for HB238

225 determinations pursuant to this section and Section 41-9A-2.1  
226 shall publish on the occupational licensing board's official  
227 website the standards and factors that shall guide the board  
228 in making such determinations.

229 (d) When applying for a license, an applicant may  
230 attach to the application a valid order of limited relief  
231 granted under Section 12-26-9. A valid order of limited relief  
232 shall create a presumption that an individual's criminal  
233 conviction is not directly related to the duties and  
234 responsibilities for which a license is required.

235 ~~(b) An occupational licensing board may not~~  
236 ~~automatically deny an application for a license or revoke an~~  
237 ~~existing license because of a criminal conviction when a valid~~  
238 ~~order of limited relief has been issued for the otherwise~~  
239 ~~disqualifying conviction or convictions in question; provided,~~  
240 ~~however, an occupational licensing board may consider the~~  
241 ~~conduct underlying a conviction upon which an order of limited~~  
242 ~~relief was granted and may deny, revoke, or suspend a license~~  
243 ~~based on that underlying conduct.~~

244 ~~(c) This section does not apply to law enforcement~~  
245 ~~employment, Alabama Peace Officers' Standards and Training~~  
246 ~~Commission certification, or the issuance of drivers'~~  
247 ~~licenses.~~

248 (e) This section and Section 41-9A-2.1 do not apply to  
249 any licensure requirement imposed by an interstate licensure  
250 compact or other interstate mutual recognition licensure  
251 requirement imposed by law to which Alabama is subject, or to  
252 any licensure requirement imposed by federal law."



## House Judiciary Reported Substitute for HB238

253 Section 2. Sections 41-9A-2.1 is added to the Code of  
254 Alabama 1975, to read as follows:

255 §41-9A-2.1

256 (a) An individual who has been convicted of a criminal  
257 offense, at any time, may request in writing that an  
258 occupational licensing board determine whether the  
259 individual's criminal conviction disqualifies that individual  
260 from obtaining a license from the board. Any individual making  
261 a request shall include any required fee as provided in  
262 subsection (e) and information relevant to the factors listed  
263 in Section 41-9A-2(b). An occupational licensing board, by  
264 rule, may prescribe a standard request form to be used by all  
265 individual's requesting a determination.

266 (b) Not later than 30 days after receiving a request,  
267 an occupational licensing board shall make a determination,  
268 based on the factors provided in Section 41-9A-2, whether the  
269 individual's criminal conviction disqualifies the individual  
270 from obtaining a license and notify the individual, in  
271 writing, of its determination. If the occupational licensing  
272 board disqualifies the individual, the notification must  
273 include an explanation that addresses the factors provided in  
274 Section 41-9A-2.

275 (c) A determination made pursuant to this section that  
276 an individual's criminal conviction does not disqualify the  
277 individual from obtaining a license may be rescinded if, at  
278 the time the individual submits a completed application for  
279 licensure, the individual:

280 (1) Has been convicted of a subsequent crime;



## House Judiciary Reported Substitute for HB238

281 (2) Is the subject of a pending criminal charge or  
282 charges; or

283 (3) Has failed to disclose a prior criminal conviction.

284 (d) If an individual submits a completed application  
285 for licensure after an occupational licensing board has  
286 determined pursuant to this section that the individual's  
287 criminal conviction disqualifies him or her from obtaining a  
288 license, the occupational licensing board shall make a de novo  
289 determination as further provided in subsections (a) and (b).

290 (e) An occupational licensing board may charge a fee of  
291 not more than twenty dollars (\$20) per request to reimburse  
292 the board for costs incurred in making a determination.

293 (f) An occupational licensing board may adopt rules to  
294 implement Section 41-9A-2 and this section.

295 Section 3. (a) The Board of Pardons and Paroles shall  
296 create a certificate of employability that shall be issued by  
297 the board to individuals under the custody of the Department  
298 of Corrections who meet eligibility criteria established by  
299 the board, by rule, which demonstrates an individual's  
300 achievements toward successful reentry into the workforce. The  
301 eligibility criteria shall include consideration of:

302 (1) An individual's disciplinary record while in the  
303 custody of the Department of Corrections;

304 (2) Successful completion of designated programs or  
305 development of a useful skill set while in the custody of the  
306 Department of Corrections; and

307 (3) Any other factor the board deems relevant to an  
308 individual's qualification for the certificate.



## House Judiciary Reported Substitute for HB238

309 (b) The Board of Pardons and Paroles shall notify  
310 individuals in the custody of the Department of Corrections of  
311 the possibility to earn a certificate of employability. Prior  
312 to being released on parole, the board shall determine whether  
313 an individual meets the eligibility criteria and if so, issue  
314 a certificate of employability when the individual is released  
315 from the custody of the department for use in obtaining  
316 employment.

317 (c) An individual required to register as a sex  
318 offender pursuant to Chapter 20A of Title 15 or convicted of a  
319 violent offense, as defined in Section 12-25-32, is ineligible  
320 to be issued a certificate of employability.

321 (d) The Board of Pardons and Paroles shall revoke a  
322 certificate of employability if the individual to whom the  
323 certificate of employability was issued is convicted of a  
324 felony offense committed after the issuance of the certificate  
325 of employability.

326 (e) (1) In a judicial or administrative proceeding  
327 alleging negligent hiring, a certificate of employability  
328 issued to an individual pursuant to this section may be  
329 introduced as evidence of an employer's due care in hiring  
330 that individual if the employer knew of the certificate at the  
331 time of the alleged negligent hiring.

332 (2) In any proceeding on a claim against an employer  
333 for negligent hiring based upon the prior conviction of an  
334 employee, a certificate of employability issued to an  
335 individual pursuant to this section shall provide immunity for  
336 the employer with respect to the claim of negligent hiring if



## House Judiciary Reported Substitute for HB238

337 the employer knew of the certificate at the time of the  
338 alleged negligent hiring. This subdivision does not provide  
339 immunity to the employer for other claims related to the  
340 conduct of the employee.

341 (3) The revocation of a certificate of employability  
342 does not affect the right of an employer to rely on the  
343 validity of the certificate of employability at the time of  
344 hiring unless the employer knew before the individual was  
345 employed that the certificate of employability was fraudulent  
346 or was revoked.

347 (f) An employer who hires an individual who has been  
348 issued a certificate of employability may be held liable in a  
349 civil action based on or relating to the retention of the  
350 individual as an employee only if:

351 (1) The individual, after being hired, demonstrates a  
352 danger to others or is convicted of a felony;

353 (2) The plaintiff proves by a preponderance of the  
354 evidence that the individual having hiring and firing  
355 responsibility for the employer had actual knowledge that the  
356 employee demonstrated a danger to others or was convicted of a  
357 felony; and

358 (3) That the individual having hiring and firing  
359 responsibility, upon having actual knowledge that the  
360 individual demonstrated a danger to others, nonetheless  
361 retained the individual as an employee.

362 (g) Nothing in this section shall be construed to  
363 constitute a waiver of the sovereign immunity of the state,  
364 consistent with Section 36-1-12, Code of Alabama 1975, and no



## House Judiciary Reported Substitute for HB238

365 action shall be maintained against the state or any agency or  
366 department thereof for issuance of or failure to issue any  
367 certificate of employability.

368 (h) This section shall not apply to any board governed  
369 by Chapter 9 or Chapter 24 of Title 34.

370 Section 4. This act shall become effective on October  
371 1, 2025, and applies to any cause of action pursuant to this  
372 act which occurs on or after October 1, 2025.