



THE SAFER FOUNDATION

Special Alert: Passage of Public Act 094-1067 (SB1279)

August 24, 2006

The Safer Foundation commends co-sponsor Illinois State Senator Rev. James T. Meeks, Chairman of the Illinois Legislative Black Caucus, and chief sponsors Illinois State Senator Terry Link and State Representative Arthur Turner on the passage of SB 1279 by the Illinois General Assembly on May 4, 2006. Safer also commends Governor Rod Blagojevich for supporting the drafting and funding of this legislation and for signing it into law as Public Act 094-1067 on August 1, 2006, effective immediately. This act:

- Provides a tax credit to employers that hire qualified individuals. The amount of the credit for wages paid to qualified formerly incarcerated individuals may not exceed \$600 for all taxable years with respect to each qualified individual and is 5% of the qualified wages paid to a qualified individual. (The amount of the credit is 25% of the federal work opportunity credit for wages paid to eligible formerly incarcerated individuals.) This portion of the legislation becomes effective January 1, 2007.
- Grants the Department of Corrections the power to provide a pre-release job preparation program for individuals incarcerated in Illinois adult correctional centers.
- Expands the pool of eligibility for Certificates of Relief from Disabilities and Certificates of Good Conduct to include individuals convicted not more than twice of a felony. Persons convicted of crimes of violence, criminal sexual offenses, or Class X felonies are not eligible.
- Expands the occupational licenses covered by Certificates of Relief from Disabilities from the current 18 to 27 to include those limited by the following codes or acts:
 - The Auction License Act
 - The Illinois Architecture Practice Act of 1989
 - The Dietetic and Nutrition Services Practice Act
 - The Environmental Health Practitioner Licensing Act
 - The Funeral Directors and Embalmers Licensing Code
 - The Land Sales Registration Act of 1999
 - The Professional Geologist Licensing Act
 - The Illinois Public Accounting Act
 - The Structural Engineering Practice Act of 1989.
- Provides that all state contracts include notice of encouragement to employers to hire individuals who have been released from an Illinois adult correctional facility within the last year as well as qualified veterans.
- Requires the Department of Central Management Services to submit an annual report to the Governor and to the Illinois General Assembly regarding the activities taken to consider hiring qualified recently incarcerated individuals and veterans. The report must include the number of vendors who have hired Illinois residents discharged from Illinois adult correctional centers.

The Safer Foundation's Policy and Advocacy Division provided a 9-point policy plan to Illinois Senator James T. Meeks focused on recommendations to remove barriers to employment for people with criminal records based on its work with CARRE (Council of Advisors to Reduce Recidivism through Employment), the Governor's Statewide Community Safety and Reentry Working Group, the Mayoral Policy Caucus on Prisoner Reentry, and Safer's People with Criminal Records Advocacy Group. Senator Meeks worked with the Illinois Black Caucus, the Illinois General Assembly, and the Governor's Office to craft this legislation, and we are pleased that many of our recommendations were incorporated into this legislation.