

1 State of Arkansas  
2 95th General Assembly  
3 Regular Session, 2025  
4

# A Bill

SENATE BILL 462

5 By: Senator J. Scott  
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## For An Act To Be Entitled

9 AN ACT TO CREATE A CERTIFICATE OF EMPLOYABILITY FOR A  
10 PERSON WITH A FELONY CONVICTION; TO ALLOW THE  
11 DIVISION OF CORRECTION AND CIRCUIT COURTS TO ISSUE  
12 CERTIFICATES OF EMPLOYABILITY; AND FOR OTHER  
13 PURPOSES.  
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## Subtitle

17 TO CREATE A CERTIFICATE OF EMPLOYABILITY  
18 FOR A PERSON WITH A FELONY CONVICTION;  
19 AND TO ALLOW THE DIVISION OF CORRECTION  
20 AND CIRCUIT COURTS TO ISSUE CERTIFICATES  
21 OF EMPLOYABILITY.  
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23 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:  
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25 SECTION 1. Arkansas Code Title 16, Chapter 90, is amended to add an  
26 additional subchapter to read as follows:

27 Subchapter 16 – Certificate of Employability  
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29 16-90-1601. Issuance by the Division of Correction

30 (a) The Division of Correction shall issue a certificate of  
31 employability to a prisoner if the prisoner:

32 (1) Achieved one (1) or both of the following:

33 (A) While incarcerated, successfully completed one (1) or  
34 more of the following:

35 (i) A state-sponsored general education development  
36 certificate program;



1                   (ii) A vocational program for which certification is  
2 awarded; or

3                   (iii) A prerelease or other rehabilitative program or  
4 assignment as approved by the division; or

5                   (B) Before incarceration, earned a high school equivalency  
6 diploma, a high school diploma, a college degree, certification from a  
7 vocational or technical education program, or a diploma or degree from a  
8 distance learning postsecondary education program;

9                   (2) Received no major disciplinary violations during the year  
10 immediately preceding his or her release; and

11                   (3) Received a passing score or satisfactory level of competence  
12 as determined by the division on a job skills assessment test administered by  
13 the division or correctional facility.

14                   (b) A certificate of employability issued under subsection (a) of this  
15 section shall be:

16                   (1) Issued to a prisoner when he or she is released from a  
17 correctional facility;

18                   (2) On a form provided by the division; and

19                   (3) Valid unless revoked by the division.

20                   (c)(1) The division shall revoke the certificate of employability  
21 issued under this section of a person who is convicted of a felony after  
22 receiving a certificate of employability.

23                   (2)(A) The division shall provide a person whose certificate of  
24 employability has been revoked under this subsection an opportunity to file a  
25 grievance through the prisoner grievance system of the division.

26                   (B) The revocation of a certificate of employability is  
27 effective when the individual is notified of the revocation.

28                   (3) The revocation of a certificate of employability does not  
29 affect the right of an employer to rely on the validity of the certificate of  
30 employability unless the employer knew before the individual was employed  
31 that the certificate of employability had been revoked.

32                   (d)(1) A person shall not purposely state or otherwise represent that  
33 he or she has a valid certificate of employability issued by the division  
34 despite knowing that the statement or representation is false.

35                   (2) A violation of subdivision (d)(1) of this section is a Class  
36 B misdemeanor.

1       (e) The division is not civilly liable for damages based upon a  
2 decision to issue or deny issuance of a certificate of employability to a  
3 prisoner or for revoking or failing to revoke a certificate of employability  
4 issued to a prisoner.

5       (f) The division shall notify incoming prisoners of the possibility to  
6 earn a certificate of employability.

7       (g) The issuance and revocation of a certificate of employability by  
8 the division shall be a public record.

9       (h)(1) The division shall submit an annual report no later than  
10 November 1 of each year to the Governor and the Charitable, Penal, and  
11 Correctional Institutions Subcommittee of the Legislative Council.

12       (2) The report shall include the number of certificates of  
13 employability issued in the preceding twelve (12) months, the rate of  
14 recidivism among released prisoners previously issued certificates of  
15 employability, and any other information the division deems appropriate.

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17       16-90-1602. Issuance by circuit court.

18       (a) A person with one (1) or more felony or misdemeanor conviction may  
19 petition a circuit court for a certificate of employability.

20       (b)(1) When a petition for a certificate of employability is filed,  
21 the court shall notify the prosecuting attorney at least three (3) weeks  
22 before the hearing on the matter.

23       (2) The court may issue a certificate of employability subject  
24 to a restriction, condition, or additional requirement.

25       (3) When issuing, denying, or revoking a certificate of  
26 employability, the court may impose conditions for reapplication.

27       (c) The court shall revoke the certificate of employability issued  
28 under this section of a person who is convicted of a felony after receiving a  
29 certificate of employability.

30       (d)(1) The court may revoke a certificate of employability issued  
31 under this section if the court finds by a preponderance of the evidence that  
32 the person made a material misrepresentation in his or her petition for a  
33 certificate of employability.

34       (2) A revocation of a certificate of employability may be  
35 initiated:

36           (A) By the court on the court's own motion; or

1           (B) Upon a motion of the prosecuting attorney.

2           (3) The person to whom the certificate of employability was  
3 issued is entitled to a hearing on the motion for revocation.

4           (4) The person to whom the certificate of employability was  
5 issued and the prosecuting attorney shall be given notice of the motion for  
6 revocation at least three (3) weeks before a hearing on the matter.

7           (e) The revocation of a certificate of employability does not affect  
8 the right of an employer to rely on the validity of the certificate of  
9 employability unless the employer knew before the individual was employed  
10 that the certificate of employability had been revoked.

11           (f) The prosecuting attorney shall have the right to appear and be  
12 heard at any proceeding relating to the issuance or revocation of the  
13 certificate of employability.

14           (g)(1) The court may call upon a probation officer or parole officer  
15 for any additional investigation or verification of the person's conduct that  
16 the court reasonably believes necessary to the decision to issue or revoke a  
17 certificate of employability.

18           (2) If there are material disputed issues of fact or law, the  
19 person or the district attorney may submit evidence and be heard on those  
20 issues.

21           (h) The issuance and revocation of a certificate of employability by a  
22 court shall be a public record.

23           (i)(1) A person shall not purposely state or otherwise represent that  
24 he or she has a valid certificate of employability issued by a court despite  
25 knowing that the statement or representation is false.

26           (2) A violation of subdivision (i)(1) of this section is a Class  
27 B misdemeanor.

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29           16-90-1603. Effect on certain proceedings.

30           (a) In a judicial or administrative proceeding alleging negligence or  
31 other fault, a certificate of employability may be introduced as evidence of  
32 a person's due care in hiring, retaining, licensing, leasing to, admitting to  
33 a school or program, or otherwise transacting business or engaging in  
34 activity with the person to whom the certificate of employability was issued  
35 if the person knew of the certificate of employability at the time of the  
36 alleged negligence or other fault.

1           (b) In a claim of negligent hiring against an employer, a certificate  
2 of employability may constitute evidence of lack of negligence unless the  
3 employer knew or should have known that the employee should not have been  
4 hired for the position due to the nature of the employee's criminal history  
5 at the time of the employer's decision to hire the employee.

6           (c) A certificate of employability does not provide relief from:

7                   (1) A requirement to register under the Sex Offender  
8 Registration Act of 1997, § 12-12-901 et seq.;

9                   (2) A suspension, cancellation, or revocation of a driver's  
10 license, commercial driver's license, or probationary license; or

11                   (3) A denial, ineligibility, or automatic suspension of a  
12 healthcare professional's license due to a substance use disorder.

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