

# AFTER PRISON: ROADBLOCKS TO REENTRY

## A REPORT ON STATE LEGAL BARRIERS FACING PEOPLE WITH CRIMINAL RECORDS

### Report Card

#### PENNSYLVANIA

Roadblocks are defined as unfair and counterproductive barriers to the reentry into society of people with criminal records, so the fewer the roadblocks, the better the score. Each of the 7 categories has a maximum of 10 roadblocks, so the highest (and worst) possible score is 70 roadblocks.

#### **EMPLOYMENT: 5 ROADBLOCKS**

Employers can ask about and use arrests that never led to conviction in hiring decisions. Public and private employers may not automatically bar someone from a job and may only consider job-related felony and misdemeanor convictions. Occupational licensing agencies may consider any felony but only job-related misdemeanor convictions in hiring decisions. No opportunity for people with criminal records to obtain restoration of civil rights/certificates of rehabilitation for employment purposes.

#### **PUBLIC ASSISTANCE AND FOOD STAMPS: 5 ROADBLOCKS**

Pennsylvania modified the federal drug felony ban to prohibit individuals convicted of a drug-related felony or misdemeanor offense from receiving food stamps and cash assistance until they have completed their sentence.

#### **ACCESS TO CRIMINAL RECORDS: 8 ROADBLOCKS**

Records of arrests that never led to conviction can be expunged. Individuals may not deny the existence of an expunged record. Records of convictions for the most part cannot be expunged. Records are available on the Internet.

#### **VOTING: 3 ROADBLOCKS**

Bars individuals who are incarcerated for a felony from voting

#### **PUBLIC HOUSING: 5 ROADBLOCKS**

The Philadelphia Public Housing Authority makes individual eligibility determinations based on relevance of criminal history, but considers arrests that never led to conviction.

#### **ADOPTIVE AND FOSTER PARENTING: 10 ROADBLOCKS**

No individualized determinations about suitability to be an adoptive or foster parent.

#### **DRIVERS' LICENSES: 5 ROADBLOCKS**

Licenses are automatically revoked or suspended for at least 6 months when individuals are convicted for a wide range of drug or alcohol offenses, not just those related to driving. No opportunity to obtain restricted licenses to attend work, school, or treatment.

#### **TOTAL ROADBLOCKS: 41**

**Rank: 47<sup>th</sup> best out of 51**