

February 21, 2017

State Representative Klint Kesto  
Chairman, House Committee on Law and Justice  
Anderson House Office Building  
124 North Capitol Avenue  
Lansing, MI 48933

State Representative Peter Lucido  
Majority Vice-Chair, House Committee on Law and Justice  
Anderson House Office Building  
124 North Capitol Avenue  
Lansing, MI 48933

State Representative Stephanie Chang  
Minority Vice-Chair, House Committee on Law and Justice  
Anderson House Office Building  
124 North Capitol Avenue  
Lansing, MI 48933

RE: Support for House Bill 4065

Dear Chairman Kesto, Majority Vice-Chair Lucido and Minority Vice-Chair Chang,

We write to you to support House Bill 4065, introduced by State Representative Dave Pagel, and to urge its swift passage in your committee and the full House.

Your committee has prioritized and pursued common sense justice system policies in Michigan, particularly with regards to civil asset forfeiture reform. This new legislation, HB 4065, amends MCL 791.205a to establish a policy allowing for the Department of Corrections to employ individuals with a previous felony conviction if their employment will not impact public safety nor departmental operations, and if the director of the Department provides written approval.

This legislation does not require any particular employment, but simply gives the Department the option of choosing to employ a person with a criminal record who has proven they are rehabilitated and can serve as a valuable addition to the Department. Without these employment opportunities, Michigan is at risk of continuing the cycle of recidivism that plagues our justice system. HB 4065 is an important step in the right direction towards both a safer Michigan and a more robust workforce.

The U.S. Justice Action Network is the largest bipartisan organization working to reform the justice system in Michigan and on the federal level. From our work in states such as Kentucky, Louisiana, and Oklahoma, we have seen first-hand the impact of common sense reforms that clear government obstacles to an individual's return to

society, ensuring we are diverting people away from, and not towards, a life of crime.

By passing this bill, lawmakers in Michigan will be expanding the opportunity for those who have earned it to find a job, earn a living, and choose a productive, law-abiding life. We thank you for your consideration of this important measure, and invite you to contact us with any questions.

Sincerely,

Holly Harris  
Executive Director  
U.S. Justice Action Network