



Office of the Governor

JB Pritzker

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Gov. Pritzker Signs Legislation Expanding Employment Opportunities in Gaming Industry for Formerly Incarcerated Illinoisans

SB 1462 allows the Illinois Gaming Board to consider individual circumstances when licensing people for hospitality roles

SPRINGFIELD – Governor JB Pritzker today signed legislation which will allow individuals with certain felony convictions the opportunity to apply for non-gaming positions at Illinois casinos, largely in the hospitality industry. The Illinois Gaming Board (IGB) worked cooperatively with UNITE HERE Local 1 and Senate Bill 1462’s sponsors Senator Robert Peters and Representative Kam Buckner to draft the bill.

“Here in the Land of Lincoln, we believe that people deserve second chances—and that includes the formerly incarcerated and those who have been convicted of a felony,” **said Governor JB Pritzker**. “As we transform our justice system away from incarceration and towards rehabilitation, we are creating opportunities for Illinoisans who’ve made mistakes to secure gainful employment and build better lives for themselves, their families, and their communities.”

“This new legislation addresses the needs of people impacted by the legal system so they can thrive in the next chapter of their life, and access to economic opportunities is critical on that journey,” **said Lt. Gov. Juliana Stratton**. “Our administration continues to break barriers and find ways to empower every Illinoisan. Supporting those re-entering communities after incarceration is a priority of the Justice, Equity, and Opportunity Initiative housed in my office, and as one Illinois, we are laser-focused on the measures we can take to heal together.”

Currently under state law, people who have a felony conviction are ineligible to work at a casino in both gaming and non-gaming positions. SB 1462 removes automatic disqualification for non-gaming positions and allows the IGB to consider individual facts and circumstances about past criminal convictions when making a licensing decision for casino occupational license applicants.

The jobs affected by SB 1462 are for non-gaming positions such as restaurant staff, maintenance, and housekeeping.

The IGB will consider the following factors when determining an applicant's eligibility for licensure including:

- Length of time since the conviction occurred
- Number of convictions that appear on the conviction record
- Nature and severity of the conviction and its relationship to the safety and security of others and/or the integrity of gaming
- The facts or circumstances surrounding the conviction
- The age of the employee at the time of the conviction
- Any evidence of rehabilitation efforts.

“Individuals impacted by the justice system often have a hard time seeking worthwhile employment opportunities when transitioning back into society,” **said State Sen. Robert Peters, (D-Chicago)**. “These individuals have served their time and should be able to move on with their lives. There are many non-gaming related jobs within casinos, such as hospitality-related positions. Connecting this vulnerable community with these good paying union jobs will empower folks to become financially secure and stimulate the growth of safe communities.”

“This is a step forward towards fairness and enfranchisement for Illinoisans who have been justice-involved,” **said State Rep. Kam Buckner, (D-Chicago)**. “Our system should be prefaced on rehabilitation, but if people who have paid their debts to society can't get jobs, that's not going to happen. This measure expands employment opportunities to formerly incarcerated individuals who are committed to being productive members of their communities. Illinois' hospitality industry is steadily growing, and people should not be shut out because of their past.”

“I applaud the efforts of Governor Pritzker and the bill's sponsors to enact Senate Bill 1462 into law,” **said IGB Administrator Marcus Fruchter**. “This law preserves the IGB's necessary ability to protect the integrity of Illinois gaming while providing an opportunity for gainful employment in non-gaming casino positions to applicants with prior convictions.”

“Our union has worked hard to ensure that hospitality workers at Illinois casinos can have a path to good jobs,” **said Karen Kent, President of UNITE HERE Local 1**. “But our work is incomplete if so many of our friends, our neighbors, beloved members of our families and our communities, are forever locked out of these jobs because of a prior conviction. Today, we're giving people hope for a second chance.”

"The Illinois AFL-CIO works to provide opportunities for all workers to have a middle-class income, affordable health care, and a secure retirement. This legislation ensures that justice-involved individuals have access to a good paying, union job like anyone else," **said Illinois AFL-CIO President Tim Drea.** "Today's bill signing is a major step toward creating a fairer, more just economy. It opens the door to workers from every walk of life - from building maintenance to hospitality and housekeeping. We are excited to stand with UNITE HERE Local 1, Governor Pritzker, our legislative partners and community leaders who helped make this a reality."

"The CFL is proud to see the state of Illinois remove barriers for people with a felony conviction seeking non-gaming job opportunities in Illinois casinos," **said Robert Reiter, President of the Chicago Federation of Labor.** "This legislation will make the workplace in our state's casinos more equitable, accessible, and pro-worker."

The IGB serves as the state regulatory and law enforcement agency responsible for overseeing all licensed casino gambling, video gaming, and sports wagering to ensure the integrity and safety of Illinois gaming while generating revenue for the state and gaming host communities. Illinois is presently home to 13 casinos, more than 8,400 licensed video gaming establishments, and nine sportsbooks.

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