GACHEP

GEORGIA COALITION FOR HIGHER EDUCATION IN PRISON

Beyond the Box GA is a campaign organized by a coalition of organizations, students, faculty and formerly incarcerated people who are invested in bridging the education gap for the 4.2 million Georgians with a criminal record.

Our mission: is to educate the public on how college applications ask if someone has been convicted of a crime and influence policy that is targeted to create a more inclusive admissions process.

Our vision: All people, no matter what their criminal convictions may be, have equal access to the educational opportunities that exist here in Georgia and around the nation.

What is the Box that we are trying to ban? The box refers to the question that asks whether or not someone has been convicted of a felony.

If we banned the box, what would it affect?

Reentry: The current recidivism rate in Georgia is estimated at 50%. Recidivism measures the number of people returning to jail or prison within three years of release. According to Northwestern, the risk of recidivism decreases in correlation to the amount of education one obtains. For example, a four year degree yields a recidivism rate of 5.6%, ten times lower than the current rate.

Taxes: Georgia currently pays $1.1 billion dollars per year to maintain the corrections and supervision side of the criminal legal system. Georgians are paying taxes for a system that works only half of the time. With equal access to education we have the potential to cut the recidivism rate–and therefore the spending on incarceration–by a substantial amount.

Employment and the Economy: Unemployment among formerly incarcerated individuals is estimated to be 5 times higher than the general population. This is because of many factors like having a criminal record and low education attainment. In turn, because of these barriers, Georgia's economy loses over $1 billion dollars a year. Dollars that could fund education, infrastructure, and brighter futures.

Safer communities: Research has found that incarceration does not decrease violent crime. Incarceration is not keeping our communities safer in a meaningful and effective manner. However, with education as a solution, we are opening the door to solutions like employment and advocacy as a means to an end rather than crime.

In comparison (in the numbers):

- The cost per year to incarcerate someone is approximately 20K vs. the average cost per year for higher education which is 9.4K
- The recidivism rate amongst system impacted people with a bachelor's degree was 5.6% vs. a 50% recidivism rate for those who did not have a bachelor's degree or equivalent**.**

This question we are attempting to ban contributes to the many barriers that persons with criminal records already face. With the removal of this question we undoubtedly believe that those impacted by the criminal legal system will be able to further themselves through educational opportunities.

(At the bottom we can put partner organization logos)