

PROPOSED BILL IN WISCONSIN COULD HURT POTENTIAL JOBS



Felonies are becoming more of a big deal than the job market may notice. If you are a convicted felon, then you may have a hard time finding a job in the Wisconsin economy. It would not matter how long ago the felony was because it will still apply to the proposed bill. The current law in Wisconsin states that a person cannot be discriminated against because of their past criminal history. Employers in Wisconsin have been afraid to hire convicted felons in the past anyways. This reason is because if a convicted felon gets fired, then the employer could face a criminal discrimination law suit. There are thousands of people who are living in Wisconsin that have felony convictions. A man by the name of Jebb Filz is just one of those thousands of people living in Wisconsin with a criminal past. Filz is one convicted felon who would like to get a job and move on from his criminal past, but this law could make it extremely difficult. "I still think if I went on the open job market, there would still be some reservations," Filz said, adding that the bill would be an additional roadblock. "It just seems like it is discrimination." A lot of employers are willing to give convicted felons a chance as long as they know they are safe from legal suits. In a lot of states there is no protection for those who have a criminal history. Anyone can get hired or fired if they have a felony and an employer can ask about a felony record. Wisconsin is one of 16 states that have any type of law regarding criminal records and potential employees. No matter how you look at it, those who have a felony in the state of Wisconsin have a hard time finding a job without this law being passed. However, a lot of convicted felons rely on a steady job to help keep them out of trouble and off the streets. The number of convicted felons in the state of Wisconsin is around 46,340. These are just convicted felons that have been recorded being under the state's supervision. Filz currently works at Goodwill, which is one of the places that hires convicted felons in Wisconsin. "For a lot of employers, the minute they see that on your resume — boom — you're in the second pile," said Cindy Schmidt, who is Filz's manager at Goodwill. Working at Goodwill has really changes her perspective about workers with a criminal history. Re-entering the work force is not easy and convicted felons are feeling the heat in Wisconsin's hard economy. Employers who refuse to hire people with felony convictions are losing out on a diverse workforce." stated Filz. This bill will not affect current felons with a job position but it will definitely affect future felons looking for a job in Wisconsin.