

Chair Filler and Members of the Judiciary Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today and for holding this important hearing. My name is Lucia Bone, and I am founder of the Sue Weaver CAUSE - Commit to Always Using Screened Employees. CAUSE was founded in memory of my sister, Sue Weaver, who was brutally murdered in her home by a service worker who had not had an appropriate background screening. We are not a background screening provider; we are a non-profit organization advocating for comprehensive background checks for service workers whose jobs provide access to our homes and family members.

There is a significant threat to consumers' safety due to inadequate or non-existent background checks of people being employed to come into your home. Stories like Sue's reflect the very real and serious danger to communities. The tragedy is even more alarming because this was not an isolated incident. Every year, innocent people become victims of sexual and physical assault in their homes by workers hired as service employees with criminal records.

This is why thorough and accurate background checks are vital for public safety, and why the actions of the State Court Administrators Office to redact date of birth, a crucial identifier needed for screening, are so dangerous. People place their trust in strangers daily – whether it be in-home service providers, healthcare workers, and those they hire to look after their most vulnerable family members like their children or elderly relatives.

They place this trust under the assumption that these individuals have been properly vetted and would not harm them or those they care about. If the Court Administrator's Office policy is not remedied, this trust could, and in many cases would, be misplaced much to the harm of everyday Michiganders.

HB 5368 is a vital piece of legislation to ensure background screeners can continue to provide timely and accurate background checks to Michigan employers. Without the ability to accurately match court records with common names through date of birth, those records become essentially unusable by background screeners, which could result in malicious individuals being granted the opportunity to do great harm to the consumers they were hired to serve.

It is absurd for a person with convictions for things like sexual assault or crimes of violence to be engaged in a close customer facing role - like an in-home service employee - because the record could not be properly verified due to a misguided rule. That is why this bill is so important.

HB 5368 is a simple measure that would remedy this grievous error by the Court Administrator's Office and would ensure background screeners can continue their valuable work of protecting the public from those who would do harm.

I urge you and the entirety of the Legislature to pass this bill and do so as quickly as possible to preempt the Court Administrator's Office enactment of this rule in January 2022, and to ensure that the people of Michigan can have piece of mind that Thank you again for your time and this opportunity, and I am happy to address any questions you may have.