

Testimony of Jeff Brandt
Before the Senate State Administration Committee
Senate Bill 148

Madam Chair, members of the committee, for the record my name is Jeff Brandt, Acting State Chief Information Officer (CIO). I also rise in support of SB148.

In prior testimony you heard that the focus of this act is to minimize the risk of giving large measures of trust to individuals who have proven themselves to not be trustworthy in the past. Background checks provide the best opportunity to identify past behavior that needs to be considered in future employment decisions. Not only is this a good, common sense safeguard to put in place, it meets the criteria specified by federal agencies, such as the FBI, IRS and others, that entrust sensitive federal data to our state systems.

We anticipate that half of the State's positions that are classified as "Information Technology" positions will be subject to background checks. In addition, we have prepared a friendly amendment for your consideration that makes it clear that this legislation is limited to those positions that are identified as "IT professionals".

The process for conducting the background checks is well established and has been in use for more than two years for state employees who have responsibilities that bring them in contact with the Criminal Justice Information Network. This bill expands the use of background checks to other areas of special trust, such as areas working with HIPPA data, for example. This bill would also apply to contract employees.

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, the safeguards that are improved by this act more than justify its modest cost. I urge you to consider this bill and act favorably for its passage.

I'll be available to answer any questions you may have.

Thank you.