



Thursday, June 9, 2016

RE: FAIR EMPLOYMENT POLICY IN THE CITY OF LOS ANGELES

Council File 14-0746

To the Los Angeles City Council,

As businesses in Los Angeles, we fully support increasing our employee and applicant pools to the best of our ability and working to give workers in Los Angeles a fair chance at employment. This is why we support the Fair Chance Initiative. According to the National Institute of Justice, a criminal record reduces the likelihood of a job offer by 50 percent. Since nearly one in three Americans of working age have a criminal record, many business leaders have recognized that it not only makes good economic sense to adopt fair hiring practices, but it also strengthens communities to provide access to a fair chance. Too often, a criminal record disqualifies individuals from full participation in our communities, even if they have paid their debt to society. We believe that we should not reject people at the start of our hiring process who are otherwise capable, qualified, and deserving of the opportunity to work for our business. If we want to stop the revolving door of imprisonment, we must limit the stigma so often associated with a criminal record and instead allow applicants to be judged on their job-related qualifications.

On July 1, 2014, AB 218 (Ban the Box), which removes the question about one's criminal history from initial employment applications for local and state jobs in California, became state law. The time is right for the city of Los Angeles to carry forward the mandate of AB 218 and pass our own comprehensive Fair Chance legislation for private jobs. Seven states and a number of major cities including New York, San Francisco, Chicago, and Washington D.C. have already passed ban-the-box legislation that applies to private employers. We ask your support on the Fair Chance Initiative, which—if passed by Los Angeles City Council—would help thousands of Angelenos regain their status as productive citizens by removing unnecessary barriers to employment for individuals with criminal records.

Los Angeles is home to the largest number of people who have criminal records anywhere in the nation, and the adverse consequences of mass incarceration disproportionately affect our most disadvantaged communities. Allowing individuals with a criminal history more access to the job market will decrease the city's unemployment numbers and improve the overall economy in Los

Angeles. The economic reintegration that comes with access to employment is vital to patching the fabric of our city, making it stronger. That is why we strongly support the principles behind the Fair Chance Initiative. As members of the business community, we agree that:

- Background checks and questions about criminal history, verbal or written, should be delayed until after a conditional offer of employment has been made.
- People's current character and their ability to effectively do the job should have more weight than their old criminal records; no denial or adverse action upon application for license or employment should be made unless (1) there is a direct relationship between the acts underlying one or more of the previous criminal offenses and the specific license or employment sought or held by the person; and, (2) issuance or continuation of the license or the granting or continuation of the employment would create a specific risk to property or to the safety or welfare of specific individuals or the general public.
- We need a strong enforcement mechanism where private employers are held accountable to comply with the ordinance so that employees discriminated against feel inclined to pursue the reporting process. This will create legal clarity for us around hiring practices and believe all employers in LA should be held to the same standards.

We ask your support for the Fair Chance Initiative, which will create a larger applicant pool for Los Angeles private employers like us with potential qualified employees. Without opportunities for employment, a prison sentence becomes a life sentence. We hope that you will vote to end unnecessary discrimination, and instead allow individuals with criminal records the opportunity to work, contribute to society, regain their dignity, and keep their families together.

Sincerely,

All About You Live Answering Services
All Auto Parts
Alta Centers
Bub and Grandma's Bread
Community Dynamics
Five Keys Charter School
In-Depth Appraisals
inMarket
Geyen + del Campo
Los Angeles Metro Employer Advisory Council
Robin Realty
Uber
Vernon-Central LA Trade Tech WorkSource Center



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Re: Council File 14-0746

Dear Honorable Council Members:

We believe in a God of second chances.

Yet every day, nearly one in three of our brothers or sisters is denied an opportunity for a second chance by a little check box on job applications—a little box that measures their present by the worst choice in their past.

When people have paid their dues, they do not deserve a life sentence of joblessness. It's unfair, and it hurts us all.

It's time for the City of Angeles to lead the way on adopting fair-chance hiring practices for job-seekers with records, starting by "banning the box" on job applications that asks about prior convictions and paving the way for accountability for employers who discriminate.

As the county's largest faith-based community organization with a collective membership of more than 40,000 families from 50 partner and member congregations, LA Voice and our friends in faith tirelessly seek to reform the structures in our city and county that deny people's full citizenship and common humanity.

The Fair Chance Initiative would:

- *Level the applicants' playing field* by delaying conviction inquiry until an offer of employment is made
- *Allow applicants to appeal to employers* who renege on a job offer
- *Encourages victims of discrimination to file an investigable complaint* with the City, leading to escalating restitution if the employer acted improperly

One quarter of all people returning from prison or jail return to this county, and many call Los Angeles home and search for work here as they rebuild their lives in a positive way. When they fail to succeed and then return to jail or prison, it is not their failure alone, but a failure we all share. We urge you to pass this ordinance with all haste.

During his 2015 visit to Curran-Fromhold Correctional Facility in Philadelphia, PA, Pope Francis declared, "[God] comes to meet us, so that he can restore our dignity as children of God. He wants to help us to set out again, to resume our journey, to recover our hope, to restore our faith and trust."

You can do so much to help our brothers and sisters with records set out again on their journey with dignity. We, the members and partners of LA Voice, need your support to pass the Fair Chance Initiative and then to turn it into a tool for jobs and justice and, most importantly, hope.

With hope and determination,

Auxiliary Bishop David O'Connell, San Gabriel Valley Pastoral Region, Archdiocese of LA
Fr. Gregory Boyle, S.J., Homeboy Industries
Rabbi Sharon Brous; IKAR
Rev. David Farley, Director of Justice and Compassion Ministries, United Methodist Church,
Cal-Pac Conference
Shakeel Syed, President, Islamic Shura Council of Southern California
Fr. Ted Gabrielli, S.J., Pastor, Dolores Mission
Ellie Hidalgo, Pastoral Associate, Dolores Mission
Rabbi Ronit Tsadok, IKAR
Rev. Dr. Najuma Pollard-Smith, Word of Encouragement Church and Cecil Murray Center
for Civic Engagement
Dr. Yolanda Brown, Parish Life Director, Blessed Sacrament
Fr. Kevin Ballard, Blessed Sacrament
Rev. Kirkpatrick Tyler, 2nd AME
Rev. Carlton Rhoden, Westminster Presbyterian Church
Rev. Dr. Seth Pickens, Zion Hill Baptist Church
Fr. James Mott, OSA, Pastor, Mother of Good Counsel
Fr. Tom Davis, OSA, Mother of Good Counsel
Rev. Nick Warnes, Northland Village Church
Rev. Jaime Edwards-Acton, St. Stephen's Episcopal Church
Imam Abdul Hafiz, Director, Prison Outreach Program of Islamic Shura Council of SoCal
Rabbi Ron Stern, Stephen S. Wise Temple
Rabbi Ken Chasen, Leo Baeck Temple
Rabbi Lisa Berney, Leo Baeck Temple
Rev. Kelvin Sauls, Holman United Methodist Church
Rev. Oliver Buie, Holman United Methodist Church
Rev. Gary Williams, Faith and Hamilton United Methodist Churches
Rev. Martin Garcia, World Vision
Pastors Carlos and Amparo Rincón, Directores de Centro de Vida Victoriosa
Sister Karen Collier, SSL, St. Agatha's Church
Rev. Michael Fisher, Greater Mt. Zion Church Family
Rev. Kevin Haah, New City Church
Pastor Jeff Elzinga, Cross Streets Church, Pico-Union
Rabbi Mark Borovitz, Beit T'Shuvah
Chaplain Adam Siegel, Beit T'Shuvah
Rabbi Aryeh Cohen, Rabbi in Residence, Bend the Arc
Rev. Zachary Hoover, Executive Director, LA Voice

June 9, 2016

Los Angeles City Council
City Hall
200 N. Spring Street
Long Angeles, CA 90012

RE: FAIR EMPLOYMENT POLICY IN THE CITY OF LOS ANGELES, Council File 14-0746

Dear Honorable Council Members:

The following organizations sign on in support of the Fair Chance Initiative for the City of Los Angeles.

According to the National Institute of Justice, a criminal record reduces the likelihood of a job offer by 50 percent. If we want to stop the revolving door of imprisonment, we must limit the stigma so often associated with a criminal record and instead allow applicants to be judged on their job-related qualifications.

On July 1, 2014, AB 218 (Ban the Box), which removes the question about one's criminal history from initial employment applications for local and state jobs in California, became state law. The time is right for the city of Los Angeles to carry forward the mandate of AB 218 and pass our own comprehensive Fair Chance legislation. Seven states and a number of major cities including New York, San Francisco, Chicago, and Washington D.C. have already passed ban-the-box legislation that applies to private employers. We ask your support on the Fair Chance Initiative, which—if passed by Los Angeles City Council—would help thousands of Angelenos regain their status as productive citizens by removing unnecessary barriers to employment for the formerly incarcerated.

Los Angeles is home to the largest number of people who have criminal records anywhere in the nation, and the adverse consequences of mass incarceration disproportionately affect our most disadvantaged communities. Any policy response by our city must necessarily be more comprehensive than anywhere else in the country. That is why we strongly support the principles behind the Fair Chance Initiative. We agree that: Background checks and questions about criminal history, verbal or written, should be delayed until after a conditional offer of employment has been made.

People's current character and their ability to effectively do the job should have more weight than their old criminal records; no denial or adverse action upon application for license or employment should be made unless (1) there is a direct relationship between the acts underlying one or more of the previous criminal offenses and the specific license or employment sought or held by the person; and, (2) issuance or continuation of the license or the granting or continuation of the employment would create a specific risk to property or to the safety or welfare of specific individuals or the general public.

We need a strong enforcement mechanism to keep everyone accountable— actions against the City should be enforceable by civil service or personnel code proceedings, and actions against private employers should include both a private right of action and an Administrative Remedy enforced by Wage Enforcement Division.

Without opportunities for employment, a prison sentence becomes a life sentence. We thank you again for your support, and we hope that you will vote to end unnecessary discrimination, and instead allow formerly incarcerated individuals the opportunity to work, contribute to society, regain their dignity, and keep their families together.

Sincerely,

All of Us or None/A New Way of Life
Amity Foundation
Bend the Arc: A Jewish Partnership for Justice
Beit T' Shuvah
Center for Living and Learning
Chrysalis
Homeboy Industries
Hope of the Valley Rescue Mission
Justice Not Jails
LA Voice
Los Angeles Alliance for a New Economy
Los Angeles Regional Reentry Partnership (LARRP)
5keys charter school