



C.F. 14-0746

October 2, 2015

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

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RE: FAIR EMPLOYMENT POLICY IN THE CITY OF LOS ANGELES

Dear Los Angeles City Council,

The American Civil Liberties Union of Southern California (ACLU SoCal) writes to respectfully request your support on the Fair Chance Initiative, which, if passed by City Council, would benefit thousands of Angelenos. ACLU SoCal strongly supports the proposal, which opens employment and housing opportunities for the previously convicted and promotes public safety by reducing unnecessary barriers for the nearly seven million adult Californians with criminal records.

On July 1, 2014, AB 218 (Ban the Box) became law. AB 218 removed the question about one's criminal history from the initial employment application for local and state jobs in California. The time is right for the City of Los Angeles to carry on the mandate of AB 218 to the next step.

Los Angeles is home to the largest number of people who have criminal records anywhere in the nation, and our disadvantaged communities suffer deeply from the adverse consequences of mass incarceration. Studies have shown that housing and stable employment significantly lower recidivism and increase public safety. Los Angeles will benefit when the formerly incarcerated and previously convicted can house and financially support their families while contributing to a strong economic recovery.

That is why we strongly support the proposal put forth by the Fair Chance Initiative Coalition. We agree that (1) a criminal background check should be done only after a conditional offer has been made; (2) people's current character and their ability to effectively do the job should have more weight than their old criminal records; and (3) the need for a strong enforcement mechanism to keep everyone accountable. These principles come from the very people who are negatively affected by the stigma of a criminal record. We urge you to listen to their voices, as we have.

Executive Director Hector O. Villagra

Thank you in advance for your support on this issue. We hope that you will join our broad coalition in supporting the proposed Fair Chance Initiative.

Sincerely,



Jess Farris
Policy and Advocacy Counsel
ACLU of Southern California

CC: Tiffany Johnson, All of Us or None, tiffany@anewwayoflife.org

CC: Jose Osuana, Homeboy Industries, joseosuna197@gmail.com

CC: Jay Jordan, LA Voice, jerronlavoice@gmail.com

