

14-0746

MOTION **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

In 2013, Governor Jerry Brown signed into law Assembly Bill (AB) 218 – Fairness in Government Hiring, also known as “Ban the Box” – which required that commencing July 1, 2014, the State and local governments would refrain from requiring job applicants to disclose criminal convictions until the hiring agency has verified that the applicant has met the minimum requirements for the position.

Cities like San Francisco, Philadelphia and Baltimore have also enacted similar laws requiring public and/or private employers to eliminate the criminal conviction box on job applications. While sufficient data is not yet available to determine the efficacy of criminal conviction box, advocates indicate removing barriers to employment would result in economic development benefits and a reduction in recidivism. The Center for Employment Opportunities has found that recently released prisoners who are provided with employment-specific interventions within three months from their release from prison are less likely to return to prison.

A City of Los Angeles Fair Chance Initiative would benefit qualified job applicants with a criminal record and our economy. Many qualified job applicants are discouraged from applying for employment because the box on job applications requires the disclosure of criminal history which often leads many employers to unfairly reject job applicants. The National Institute of Justice (NIJ) has found that the impact of having a criminal record is greater among African Americans and Latinos who may already experience racial discrimination in the labor market. According to the NIJ, a criminal record reduces the likelihood of a job offer by 50 percent.

In April 2011, Governor Jerry Brown signed Assembly Bill (AB 109), also known as Realignment, which shifted responsibility for certain populations of offenders from the state to the counties. The California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) estimated that approximately 9,000 offenders would be released to Los Angeles County in the first year.

Given the potential impact of prisoners released to the Los Angeles region as a result of Realignment, compounded by the dire state of the local economy and rising unemployment rate, the City should explore the feasibility of implementing a local version of “Ban the Box” which could potentially lower recidivism, promote public safety and reduce unnecessary barriers to employment opportunities and other economic benefits.

I THEREFORE MOVE that the City Council instruct the Office of the Chief Legislative Analyst to: 1) work with the Economic and Workforce Development, Public Works Department, City Attorney, Personnel Department, any other appropriate City department and community advocates to determine the feasibility of establishing a City of Los Angeles Fair Chance Initiative, a.k.a. “Ban the Box” Policy to remove barriers for individuals with a criminal record; and 2) examine “Ban the Box” policies in other cities including procedural implementation, specific restrictions and exemptions.

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