

Voices in Support:

Fair Chance Gains Support Across the Spectrum

Supporting the ability of qualified workers with records to obtain employment, thereby reducing recidivism and lowering criminal justice costs, is a bipartisan issue that has garnered support from a variety of leaders. Below are quotes from leaders who lend their voices in support of fair chance policies.

Policymakers

Gov. Nathan Deal (R-GA) Bans the Box Because it's Good for Business.

“Ban the Box’ hiring policies enhance Georgia’s reputation as the number one place in which to do business by increasing qualified applicant pools and improving the likelihood that the employer will identify the best candidate for the position; and Georgia is positioned to enhance its reputation as regional leader by becoming the first state in the South to implement a fair hiring policy for applicants with criminal records.” State of Georgia [Executive Order](#) by the Governor (Feb. 23, 2015).

Gov. Chris Christie (R-NJ) Bans the Box to End Discrimination.

“[W]e are also going further to reform our criminal justice system by signing legislation that continues with our promise and commitment to give people a second chance.... So, today, we are banning the box and ending employment discrimination. And this is going to make a huge difference for folks who have paid their debts to society, who want to start their lives over again and are going to have an opportunity to do just that in our state.” Governor Chris Christie, [Signing Legislation to Ban the Box](#) (Aug. 11, 2014).

U.S. Senator Rand Paul (R-KY) Understands that the “Box” is a Barrier.

“I know a guy about my age in Kentucky, who grew marijuana plants in his apartment closet in college. Thirty years later, he still can’t vote, can’t own a gun, and when he looks for work he must check the box, the box that basically says: ‘I’m a convicted felon and I guess I’ll always be one.’ . . . This is a lifelong problem then with employment.” U.S. Senator Rand Paul, [Senate Judiciary Committee Testimony](#) (Sept. 16, 2013).

Business Leaders and Human Resources Personnel

Koch Industries, Employing 60,000 Workers, Drops the Question.

The company’s CEO, Charles Koch, a billionaire known for his support of conservative causes, has made criminal justice reform a priority. Mark Holden, Koch’s general counsel and senior vice president, said it made common sense for the company to take this step. “Do we want to be judged for the rest of our life for something that happened on our worst day?” Holden said. Holden said the company’s managers always have been directed to comply with federal anti-discrimination laws that prohibit automatically banning the hiring of anyone

with a record. Company spokeswoman Melissa Cohlmiia said Koch has hired people with records because they were qualified. *USA Today*, [Koch Industries Drops Criminal-History Question from Job Applications](#) (April 27, 2015).

Major Corporations Target and Walmart Ban the Box Nationally.

“Walmart removed the criminal history box from its application in 2010, said spokeswoman Dianna Gee. “The removal does not eliminate the background check or drug test, but it offers those who’ve been previously incarcerated a chance to get their foot in the door,” she said.” Target’s Vice President and General Counsel of Employee and Labor Relations, Jim Rowader said of the company’s ban the box policy, “We’re interested in a safe workplace and shopping environment . . .” *Star Tribune*, [Target to Ban Criminal History Box on Job Applications](#) (Oct. 26, 2013).

Small Business Owners Recognize the Benefit of Hiring People with Records.

“I joined Main Street Alliance of Florida, a network of local small business owners, to help change [the employment barrier problem]. Along with nearly 200 civil and workers’ rights groups around the nation, we are calling on President Obama to take executive action to ensure that qualified job-seekers with past arrests or convictions are not automatically shut out of employment opportunities with federal agencies and federal contractors.” *The Guardian*, [Keeping People with Felonies From Earning Doesn’t Make us Safer, Only Poorer](#) (March 31, 2015).

Ban the Box Policy has been a Tremendous Benefit to County.

“[T]here has been no negative or adverse consequences since we made this change back in 2007. The feedback that we’ve received has been overwhelmingly positive. In fact what we hear from members of the community is that they are far more likely to apply for a position with Alameda County based on this change that we made . . . [W]e’ve been able to expand our pool of qualified applicants as a result of this change in our application process, which has been a tremendous benefit to the County.” Jody Pollak, Alameda County Labor Relations Analyst, Testimony before the California Senate Labor Committee (June 26, 2013).

Law Enforcement

Pittsburgh Attorney General Endorses Ban the Box.

U.S. Attorney David Hickton said, “If you give someone a shot after they’ve made a mistake, they often become your best employee. . . [People] are coming out, and we have a choice. We can take steps when they come out to give them a chance, or we can cycle them right back into the system.” Mr. Hickton urged private employers to follow the lead of Pittsburgh and Philadelphia and “ban the box.” *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* [Pittsburgh’s U.S. Attorney Urges Employers to Hire People with Records](#) (May 20, 2013).

Richmond, California Chief of Police Supports Fair Hiring.

“[This policy] will help reduce recidivism and provide members of the Richmond community and other residents of California the opportunity to compete for jobs.” Chief Chris Magnus, City of Richmond, Letter in Support of California AB 218 (July 17, 2013). ■