



August 5, 2015

The President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

On behalf of the undersigned foundations and philanthropic organizations, we write to urge strong executive action to ensure that both federal agencies and federal contractors are leading the way to open up employment opportunities for qualified job-seekers who have an arrest or conviction in their past.

The undersigned are members and allies of the Executives' Alliance to Expand Opportunities for Boys and Men of Color. Formed in April 2013, the Executives' Alliance is a growing network of presidents and CEOs of national, regional and community foundations that engage in a broad array of initiatives to support boys and men of color – ranging from individual programmatic interventions to broad-scale policy change. Chief among these is reforming the criminal justice system and eliminating the collateral consequences that disproportionately impact boys and men of color, their families and their communities.

Almost one in three adults in the United States has a record that will show up on a routine criminal background check. This creates a serious barrier to employment for millions of workers, especially young men of color and others in communities of color hardest hit by decades of over-criminalization. In response to this national crisis, elected officials from across the political spectrum have embraced “fair chance” hiring reforms. These hiring reforms help restore hope and opportunity to qualified job seekers with an arrest or conviction record who otherwise struggle against significant odds to find work and contribute to their communities.

Eighteen states and more than 100 local jurisdictions have adopted “ban the box” and other fair chance hiring reforms, including screening policies requiring strict adherence to the guidelines of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission regulating the use of arrest and conviction records. And many have done so with strong bi-partisan support, most recently including reforms embraced by Governor Deal of Georgia, Governor Christie of New Jersey, and Governor Kasich of Ohio. Eight states also extend their policies to both public and private sector employers, and a growing number

of the nation's largest employers, including Koch Industries, Walmart and Target, have adopted fair chance hiring measures.

Significantly, your cabinet-level Reentry Council prioritized efforts to make the federal government a model employer of people with criminal records. And In May of 2014, the My Brother's Keeper Task Force strongly endorsed fair chance hiring reforms because they "give applicants a fair chance and allow employers the opportunity to judge individual job candidates on their merits as they reenter the workforce." We were especially encouraged by your recent remarks before the NAACP convention, stating, "Let's follow the growing number of our states, and cities, and private companies who've decided to ban the box on job applications . . ."

Seizing on the momentum across the country and the rebounding economy, we believe that now is the time to take strong executive action to open employment opportunities for the growing numbers of Americans who have been unfairly locked out of the job market because of a record. Thus, we urge you to issue an Executive Order and a Presidential Memorandum that ensure that federal agencies and federal contractors are doing their part to eliminate unnecessary barriers to employment for people with criminal records.

A muscular federal fair chance hiring initiative will go a long way to ensure fairness in the hiring process and to build stronger families and communities.

Most Respectfully,

Antonia Hernandez
President and CEO, California Community Foundation

Chet Hewitt
President, Sierra Health Foundation

Clotilde Dedecker
President, Community Foundation of Greater Buffalo

Darren Walker
President, Ford Foundation

Ernest Tollerson
President, Nathan Cummings Foundation

Ivye Allen
President, Foundation for the Mid South

Jamie Merisotis
President, Lumina Foundation

John Jackson
President, Schott Foundation for Public Education

Judy Belk
President and CEO, The California Wellness Foundation

Ken Zimmerman
President / Director of US Programs, Open Society Foundations

Kent McGuire
President, Southern Education Fund

Kevin Jennings
Executive Director, Arcus Foundation

Kriss Deiglmeier
President, Tides

La June Montgomery Tabron
President, W.K. Kellogg Foundation

Leticia Peguero
President, Andrus Family Fund

Luz Vega-Marquis
President, Marguerite Casey Foundation

Martha Toll
Executive Director, Butler Family Fund

Mary E. McClymont
President, Public Welfare Foundation

Patrick McCarthy
President, Annie E. Casey Foundation

Robert Hughes
President, Missouri Foundation for Health

Robert Ross
President, The California Endowment

Shane Murphy Goldsmith
President, Liberty Hill Foundation

Sherrie Deans
Executive Director, NBPA Foundation

Sidney Hargro
President, Community Foundation of South Jersey

Tim Silard
President, Rosenberg Foundation

Tonya Allen
President, Skillman Foundation

Yanique Redwood
President, Consumer Health Foundation