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## Latimer Levels the Job Search Playing Field; Signs Fair Chance to Work Executive Order



April 9, 2018 – County Executive George Latimer has signed an Executive Order aimed at putting Westchester residents back to work. The “Fair Chance to Work” Executive Order, which prohibits the County from inquiring about past convictions during the initial application process, will be good for our County’s economy by increasing income tax contributions, consumer activity and boosting sales tax revenues.

The signing of this Executive Order took place at the headquarters of Hudson Link for Higher Education, an organization formed in 1998 which provides college education, life skills and re-entry support to incarcerated and formerly incarcerated men and women to help them make a positive impact on their own lives, their families and communities, resulting in lower rates of recidivism, incarceration and poverty.

As Westchester County strives to be a place that ensures all people have a fair chance of employment, this policy removes a barrier for qualified workers and in turn will lift up low wage workers, increase employment and reduce crime in Westchester County.

The policy in no way prohibits background checks or fingerprinting from being performed following the submission of an application for employment – especially for applicants for jobs working with children, seniors and other vulnerable populations. It simply moves the question from the beginning of the application process to after a potential employee has the opportunity to present all of their qualifications.

**Latimer said:** “Eliminating Westchester residents from job consideration who have made past mistakes from the opportunities to better their future before they even have a chance to right their wrongs hurts our County as a whole. This policy expands Westchester’s workforce, our tax base and can help residents pull themselves up and provide for their families and loved ones.”

Employment is the single most important influence on decreasing recidivism. Two years after release, nearly twice as many employed people with records had avoided another encounter with law enforcement than their unemployed counterparts.

**Hudson Link for Higher Education Executive Director Sean Pica said:** “Our goal is to expand what is possible for all of our clients. What County Executive Latimer’s Executive Order does is to help with just that. Expanding what is possible is the first step in making what was once merely possible become a reality.”