



*"Everyone deserves a safe place to call Home."*

Dear Mayor Adler, Mayor Pro Tem Tovo, and Council Members,

I am writing this letter in support of the proposed Fair Chance ordinance being considered by you and your colleagues.

Job applicants with criminal justice histories often face additional barriers in finding employment. There are an estimated 70 million people in the United States—nearly one in three adults—who have arrest or conviction records. Research shows that when job seekers who are qualified for employment struggle to find a job and maximize their potential, families struggle, and our economy as a whole is weakened.

In response, many cities, counties, and states have adopted what are widely known as "ban the box" policies so that employers consider a job candidate's qualifications first, without the stigma of a conviction record. These initiatives provide applicants a better chance at employment by removing the conviction history question on the job application and delaying the background check inquiry until later in the hiring.

Furthermore, several cities and seven states—Hawaii, Illinois, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New Jersey, Oregon and Rhode Island—have removed the conviction history question on job applications for private employers, greatly expanding the number of individuals benefiting from the policy. Federally, the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) endorsed removing the conviction question from job applications as a best practice in its 2012 guidance.

Many of our neighbors who are struggling with housing stability and homelessness are also struggling with income security. Ban the Box (or Fair Chance) policies stand to have an especially positive impact on our community's ability to end homelessness, build a livable wage job market, address poverty and build a healthier, stronger Austin. A fair chance ordinance for this City will expand our ability to increase economic opportunities for all Austinites.

Thank you for considering this critical policy.

Sincerely,

Mitchell Gibbs,  
Executive Director  
Front Steps, Inc.  
512-305-4156



October 12, 2015

Dear Mayor Adler, Mayor Pro Tem Tovo, and Council Members,

I am writing this letter in support of the proposed Fair Chance ordinance being considered by you and your colleagues.

Job applicants with records often face additional barriers in finding employment. There are an estimated 70 million people in the United States—nearly one in three adults—who have arrest or conviction records. Research shows that when job seekers who are qualified for employment struggle to find a job and maximize their potential, families struggle, and our economy as a whole is weakened.

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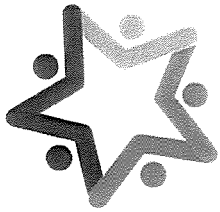
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Thank you for passing this critical policy.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Natalie Madeira Cofield".

Natalie Madeira Cofield  
President & CEO  
Greater Austin Black Chamber of Commerce



AUSTIN GAY & LESBIAN  
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

[www.aglcc.org](http://www.aglcc.org)

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**Project Manager**

Ceci Gratias

**Mission:** To empower and  
strengthen the LGBT  
business community and its  
allies.

A 501(c)(6) non-profit  
organization.

AGLCC  
PO Box 49216  
Austin, Texas 78765  
(512) 761-LGBT (5428)  
[info@aglcc.org](mailto:info@aglcc.org)

October 12, 2015

Austin City Council  
Austin City Hall  
301 W. 2<sup>nd</sup> Street  
Austin, Texas 78701

Dear Mayor Adler, Mayor Pro Tem Tovo, and Council Members,

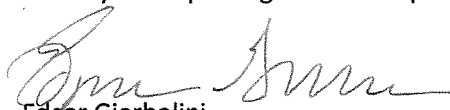
I am writing this letter on behalf of the Austin Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce in support of the proposed Fair Chance ordinance being considered by you and your colleagues.

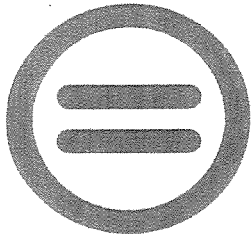
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Thank you for passing this critical policy.

  
Edgar Gierbolini  
AGLCC Chairperson



**Austin Area  
Urban League**

*Empowering Communities.  
Changing Lives.*

8011-A Cameron Rd.  
Suite 100  
Austin, TX 78754-3811  
512-478-7176-T  
512-478-1239-F  
www.aaul.org info@aaul.org

October 9, 2015

Dear Mayor Adler, Mayor Pro Tem Tovo, and Council Members,

I am writing this letter in support of the proposed Fair Chance ordinance being considered by you and your colleagues.

Job applicants with records often face additional barriers in finding employment. There are an estimated 70 million people in the United States—nearly one in three adults—who have arrest or conviction records. Research shows that when job seekers who are qualified for employment struggle to find a job and maximize their potential, families struggle, and our economy as a whole is weakened.

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Thank you for passing this critical policy.

Sincerely,

W. Teddy McDaniel, III.  
President & CEO  
Austin Area Urban League



*The Next Generation of Austin Leaders*

Dear Mayor Adler, Mayor Pro Tem Tovo, and Council Members,

I am writing this personal letter in support of the proposed Fair Chance ordinance being considered by you and your colleagues.

Job applicants with records often face additional barriers in finding employment. There are an estimated 70 million people in the United States—nearly one in three adults—who have arrest or conviction records. Research shows that when job seekers who are qualified for employment struggle to find a job and maximize their potential, families struggle, and our economy as a whole is weakened.

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I believe this common sense proposal is a step in the right direction to increasing affordability in our city and growing our middle class. Two critical issues we need to address now to prepare for future generations.

Thank you for passing this critical policy,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Matt Glazer".

Matt Glazer  
Executive Director  
Austin Young Chamber of Commerce

October 6, 2015

Mayor, Mayor Pro Tem, and City Council

RE: Fair Chance

Job applicants with records often face barriers in finding employment. There are an estimated 70 million people in the United States—nearly one in three adults—who have arrest or conviction records. One of the most critical components addressing recidivism and allowing people to reenter the community and stay out of prison is employment. When members of our community who are qualified for employment struggle to find a job and maximize their potential, families struggle, and our economy as a whole is weakened.

In response, many cities, counties, and states have adopted what are widely known as “ban the box” or “Fair Chance” policies so that employers consider a job candidate’s qualifications first, without the stigma of a conviction record. These initiatives provide applicants a better chance by removing the conviction history question on the job application and delaying the background check inquiry until later in the hiring.

Furthermore, several cities and seven states—Hawaii, Illinois, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New Jersey, Oregon and Rhode Island—have removed the conviction history question on job applications for private employers, greatly expanding the number of individuals benefiting from the policy. Federally, the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) endorsed removing the conviction question from job applications as a best practice in its 2012 guidance. Because our criminal justice system disparately impacts communities of color, Fair Chance policies have an especially positive impact on African-American and Latino job seekers.

The policy before the Austin City Council would require that employers refrain from asking about conviction history until the later stages of the job application process. This would apply to most or all private employers in Austin. Employers would still be allowed to run a criminal background check and use professional discretion towards relevant convictions under the policy. No state or federal rules would be superseded by the policy.

We support Austin being a pioneer in Texas by passing a comprehensive Fair Chance policy for private employers.

Thanks so much for your support on this important issue.

Steven Bercu,  
CEO, BookPeople