



February 26, 2016

The Honorable Don Zimmerman
Council Member
City of Austin
301 W 2nd St.
Austin, TX 78701

Dear Council Member Zimmerman:

On behalf of the Board of Directors of the Greater Austin Chamber of Commerce, I respectfully request that the Austin City Council not consider actions on the proposed Fair Chance Hiring ordinance (dated February 19, 2016) until May 2016, as the draft ordinance was first discussed at the Austin City Council's Work Session on Tuesday, February 23, 2016.

The Austin Chamber of Commerce is directionally supportive of the concept of Fair Chance Hiring under certain conditions. Such policies have the capacity to help individuals with criminal histories get a "second chance," access to job opportunities; and contribute positively to the economy through the increase in human capital. If more individuals are able to obtain employment, there are increased opportunities to reduce poverty rates, a goal of Opportunity Austin.

There are clearly employers who are choosing Fair Chance Hiring without government mandates. However, as currently written, the proposed city-wide government mandate on Austin employers will result in additional liability, litigation, time and cost built in to the hiring process; and may have the unintended effect of reducing opportunities for individuals with criminal histories.

Feel free to contact me at 512-478-5615, or at mrollins@austinchamber.com if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Mike Rollins'.

Michael W. Rollins, CCE
President