

RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF FAIR CHANCE HIRING
SPONSORED BY MAYOR HARDIE DAVIS (AUGUSTA, GA)

WHEREAS, fair chance hiring is the implementation of policies to assist those who have a history of criminal arrest and/or conviction obtain employment for which they are qualified by ensuring criminal history information is used fairly and individually; and

WHEREAS, over seventy (70) million people, in the United States have a criminal record which causes one in three adults to experience obstacles in securing sustainable employment; and

WHEREAS, unemployment for the formerly incarcerated is disproportionately high at five times the rate for the general public without a criminal record - twenty-seven percent (27%) compared to six percent (6%) respectively. The unemployment rate is the most staggering for Black women with a criminal record (43.6 percent), compared to Black women without a record (6.4 percent). The unemployment rate for formerly incarcerated Black men is 35.2 percent compared to 7.7 percent of Black men without a record. The unemployment rate for formerly incarcerated White women is 23.2% compared to White women without a record, 4.3%. And White men have the lowest disproportionality with unemployment for formerly incarcerated at 18.4% compared to of White men with no record, 4.3%; and

WHEREAS, according to the National Employment Law Project (NELP), the economic impacts for formerly incarcerated may affect generations because sixty percent (60%) of people who have been incarcerated remain unemployed one year after release, formerly incarcerated men can expect to work nine fewer weeks per year and they earn forty percent (40%) less than those without a record. With nearly half of all children having a parent with a record, this will cause a negative impact for communities; and

WHEREAS, the impact of a criminal record has more severe consequences for communities of color. According to NELP, the effect of a criminal record on employment is 40% more damaging for black men than white men. Formerly incarcerated white women were 93% more likely to be contacted by employers for an interview or offered a job than formerly incarcerated Black women, and Hispanic women with a prison record were 61% less likely than White women to receive a favorable response by employers; and

WHEREAS, the Fair Chance to Compete for Jobs Act of 2019, passed Congress on December 17, 2019. This legislation helps qualified workers with arrest or conviction records compete fairly for employment in federal agencies and with federal contractors by prohibiting employers from asking about arrest and conviction history on job applications and instead delay background checks until a condition job offer has been extended to applicants; and

WHEREAS, several studies document that policies such as the Fair Chance to Compete for Jobs Act of 2019 has resulted in increased employment of people with criminal records which in turn has a positive impact on communities as well as helped to meet the demand for qualified employees resulting in a stronger economy; and

WHEREAS, thirty-five (35) states, the District of Columbia, and over 150 cities and counties have adopted fair chance policies; and thirteen (13) states and eighteen (18) cities and counties have extended fair-chance laws to private employment; and

WHEREAS, individuals returning back into society have paid their debt to society for their criminal actions and successful re-entry into the community is often predicated on gainful employment and this success will create stronger families and safer communities.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the African American Mayors Association affirms support for the removal of barriers for citizens with a criminal record to obtain gainful employment and the implementation of policies and programs to help in the successful re-integration of formerly incarcerated citizens into society; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the African American Mayors Association encourages private and public employers, including its corporate partners and supporters, to implement fair chance policies and programs that would specifically aide in the successful re-integration of formerly incarcerated citizens as well as those with criminal records.