

OFFERED BY COUNCILORS ED FLYNN, JULIA MEJIA, ENRIQUE PEPÉN,
COLETTA ZAPATA, DURKAN, FERNANDES ANDERSON, FITZGERALD,
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CITY OF BOSTON IN CITY COUNCIL

ORDER FOR A HEARING TO DISCUSS THE IMPACT OF CORI ON ACCESS TO EMPLOYMENT AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES

WHEREAS: Criminal conviction harms long-term employment outcomes, and negative effects of criminal conviction are magnified for our communities of color, who not only face higher conviction rates than whites, but tend to fare worse, at baseline, on employment outcomes and related measures of wellbeing; *and*

WHEREAS: Criminal offender record information (CORI) is a person's criminal record, and even criminal cases that end in a person's favor would still be a part of the record. Having a criminal record often impedes access for past offender for employment, housing, and other opportunities; *and*

WHEREAS: In 2010, Governor Deval Patrick signed the Massachusetts Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI) Reform into law, which barred employers from asking early-stage applicants questions about their criminal history (known as "ban the box"). It also made it easier for former prisoners and convicts to seal criminal records, created a 10 year "sunset" for felony records, and a new online criminal records system; *and*

WHEREAS: In 2018, the Massachusetts legislature expanded the 2010 CORI Reform law, it reduced the period for required disclosure of misdemeanor convictions from five years to three years, prohibited employers from asking applicants about criminal records that have been sealed or expunged, and required employers to update language on job applications to make requirements regarding expunged records clearer; *and*

WHEREAS: Despite progress on CORI reform, research shows that that banning the box still often failed to reduce employer discrimination related to criminal records, and that there should also be focus on alternative measures to improve reentry prospects for former convicts and policies that decrease the likelihood of conviction in the first place, such as the elimination of cash bail systems; *and*

WHEREAS: CORI can be used as a reason for employers and other authorities to limit access to opportunities for those who are gaining reentry, and our communities of color are deeply impacted by a criminal justice system that disproportionately incarcerated and convicts the poor and people of color; *and*

WHEREAS: In our much needed discussions about racial justice and equity, we should also talk about ways to expand opportunities for our Black and Brown communities, including how we can further improve on our current CORI reforms; *and*

NOW THEREFORE BE IT ORDERED:

That the appropriate Committee of the Boston City Council holds a hearing to discuss the impact of CORI on access to employment and other opportunities, and ways to increase opportunities for those who are gaining reentry. Representatives from the City of Boston's Office of Workforce Development, Office of Returning Citizens, criminal justice advocates, as well as other relevant and interested parties shall be invited to attend.

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