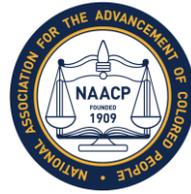


## The Ban the Box Campaign



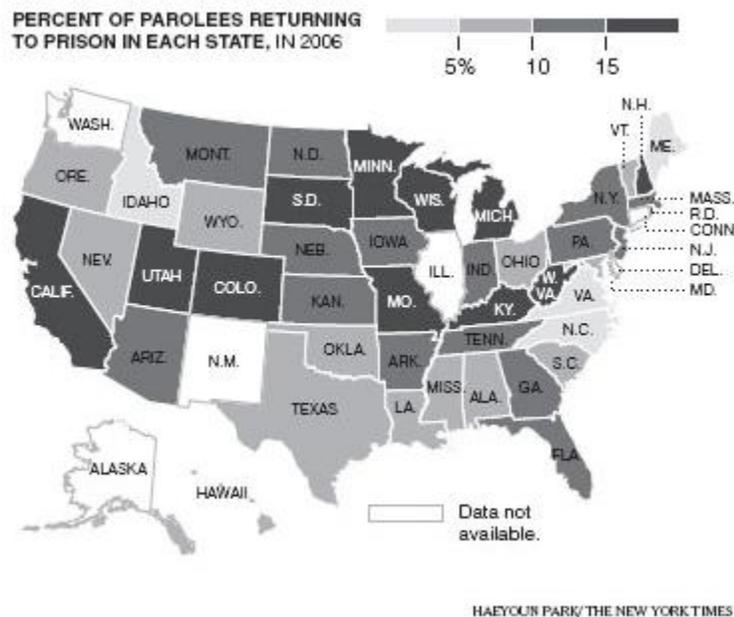
**The Problem:** Although they have paid their debt and served their time, individuals with a criminal history are too often denied the opportunity at redemption and turned away from legitimate employment, which would help engage them in productive activities that improve the quality of life for everyone and enable them to become productive members of society.

### **The Facts:**

- In 2008, there were an estimated 2.4 million people in U.S. jails and prisons – the disproportionate majority of whom (over 2/3) are people of color.
- African Americans make up roughly 13% of the U.S. population, but are 40% of its prisoners.
- Approximated 95% of incarcerated individuals are eventually released into local communities nationwide.
- More than 600,000 individuals leave U.S. prisons each year.
- Returning citizens who gain employment are more than 1/3 less likely than their counterparts to recidivate (return to crime) and are more capable of turning their lives around permanently.
- According to federal courts, Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits employers from imposing blanket bans on employment of individuals with conviction histories.
- Today, in 2010, twenty-one cities and counties have decided to “ban the box,” and not ask about an individual’s criminal record on employment applications. Founded by All of Us or None, a grassroots group from the Bay Area, “ban the box” is a campaign to eliminate the questions about criminal history from employment applications.

- The Federal Work Opportunity Tax Credit allows a company to claim a tax credit of up to \$2,400 for hiring an employee with a felony conviction within one year of the date of his or her conviction or release from incarceration.
- The U.D. Department of Labor offers a free bonding program for “at-risk” job applicants, including people with criminal records, indemnifying employees for loss of money or property due to an employee’s dishonesty or theft.

**The Solution:** In efforts to eliminate employment barriers for formerly incarcerated people, public entities (local municipalities and state governments), as well as corporations and business, must “ban the box” or remove the question about criminal history from the initial job application forms. This question should be asked during the face to face interview and only in instances where criminal history relates to the job in question. In this way, formerly incarcerated people will have the opportunity to meet and interview for jobs, increasing the applicant’s chances for employment.



Eckholm, Erik. The New York Times. Parolees Who Return to Prison. May 17, 2008: [http://www.nytimes.com/2008/05/17/us/17parole.html?\\_r=2](http://www.nytimes.com/2008/05/17/us/17parole.html?_r=2)