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## **Cincinnatians Demand *Fair Hiring Now* No-felon hiring rule wastes taxpayer dollars, harms public safety**

Thursday, February 25, 2010, 9:00 a.m. | 3rd Floor–City Hall, 805 Plum Street

CINCINNATI—On Thursday, February 25th, the Ohio Justice & Policy Center, the AMOS Project, and the Cincinnati Human Relations Commission will lead a broad coalition of organizations to deliver over 1000 letters signed by Cincinnati citizens demanding that the Cincinnati Civil Service Commission give fair consideration to job applicants with old and irrelevant criminal records. The City's current no-felon hiring policy condemns rehabilitated people to perpetual unemployment and under-employment, thus increasing the burden on our overloaded criminal justice and public welfare systems.

This *Fair Hiring Now* campaign is being launched in conjunction with the AMOS Project's Nehemiah Campaign to Rebuild Cincinnati, which was announced at a rally in Avondale on Tuesday.

For at least three years, the City has actively opposed these modest rule changes. In 2006, the Commission refused to hire Gene Mays based only on two drug-abuse felonies, which were then 13 and 19 years old. The Commission knew that Mr. Mays had been clean for ten years, that he was #1 for all five years of his union apprenticeship, and that he had glowing recommendations from all his supervisors. The Commission's response: "Mr. Mays has a couple felony convictions on his record, and could therefore not be hired for City employment." No further explanation was ever given. (See video at: [vimeo.com/6055716](http://vimeo.com/6055716))

Mayor Mallory has talked on several occasions about the importance of ex-offender rehabilitation and employment. Yet, he has taken no action to get the Fair Hiring Policy adopted. In fact, the City's law department, under the mayor's direction, fought Mr. Mays' appeals for employment all the way to the Ohio Supreme Court.

The Fair Hiring Policy, which has also been repeatedly presented to City Council, ensures that old or irrelevant convictions are not used to automatically block qualified individuals from city jobs. But at the same time, the Policy allows the City to reject applicants for good reasons. (Policy available at: [www.ohiojpc.org](http://www.ohiojpc.org))

"This is a matter of justice. We need a Fair Hiring Policy whether we're in a fiscal crisis or not," said AMOS Project pastor Troy Jackson. "Everyone who is ready, willing, and qualified needs a fair shot at a job if Cincinnati is going to pull out of this recession."

"People of faith across this city believe this simple truth: human redemption is possible," said AMOS Project President Pastor Gregory Chandler. "Treating folks who have turned their lives around like pariahs damages them *and it damages all of us*. The path to prosperity is a shared one. The City's no-felon rule violates our fundamental values, damages struggling families, and tears at the fabric of our society."

"The Fair Hiring Policy is common sense," said David Singleton, Executive Director of the Ohio Justice & Policy Center. "The Policy simply makes sure that the right person for the job is identified and that an old criminal record is not arbitrarily used as a disqualifier. The Commission should be required to consider the time lapsed since the last offense, the seriousness of the offense, and the record of rehabilitation. Now, none of that is considered—and excellent employees like Gene Mays are tossed out."

The Ohio Justice & Policy Center is a non-partisan, non-profit law firm representing people marginalized by the criminal justice system and advocating for local and statewide smart-on-crime reform. The AMOS Project is a coalition of congregations in Greater Cincinnati dedicated to promoting justice, improving the quality of life for all residents in Hamilton County and Ohio, and developing the leadership skills of low-income and working people to be active in public life.

In addition to the 1000 citizen letters, the following organizations  
have signed letters in support of the Fair Hiring Policy:

Talbert House  
Urban League  
Michael K. Allen & Associates, Attorneys at Law  
Adath Israel Congregation  
Jobs Plus  
Power Inspires Progress  
DeSales Crossing Marianist Community  
Mann & Mann, LLC (Attorneys at Law & former mayor of Cincinnati)  
Cincinnati State Community and Technical College  
North Presbyterian Church  
Crossroads Community Church  
Lighthouse Youth Services  
First Christian Assembly of God  
Greater Cincinnati Coalition for the Homeless  
BRIDGES for a Just Community

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