

September 13, 2017

The Honorable Edmund G. Brown, Jr.
Governor of the State of California
State Capitol, Suite 1173
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Support AB 1008 (McCarty) – The Fair Chance Act

Dear Governor Brown:

I am writing to you in support of AB 1008 (McCarty), the timely “ban the box” measure, that has landed on your desk. I urge you to sign this bill into law. This measure is ultimately about creating equality of opportunity in California and, with your signature, you can deliver two important and overdue messages.

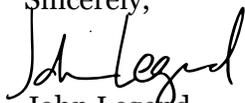
The first is a message of hope to the 8 million people in California with an arrest or conviction record. For too long, these men and women have been defined by the worst moments of their lives. They have been stigmatized, even after paying their debt to society, **and they have seen how a criminal record takes a wrecking ball to future employment.**

Six in ten people who have been incarcerated are still unemployed a year after release. Even those who find work cannot escape the long shadow of their record; instead, they can expect to earn 40 percent less. And because nearly half of all children in this country have a parent with a record, these stigmas cross generations, creating a vicious cycle of instability and adversity.

In California, one in three of our residents—our friends, neighbors, and family members—has a criminal history. **AB 1008 would ensure these Californians get a fair chance to work.** Even in the toughest of circumstances, people have the potential to learn, grow, and recreate themselves. AB 1008 symbolizes a belief in the quintessentially American ideas of redemption and renewal.

The second message is about our moral obligation, which you emphasized in a recent speech to employers in San Diego. Our duty to the 130,000 incarcerated individuals in California—and the several thousand that are released each year thanks in part to reforms you have championed—is to ensure there is hope and a viable path for them to succeed. We can achieve this by helping them find work and building the sense of community, dignity, and purpose that comes along with it. Following nine other states, and our own home cities of Los Angeles and San Francisco, **AB 1008 is an opportunity for California as a whole to take a major step in this direction.**

Sincerely,



John Legend