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**Assemblymember Kevin McCarty Introduces Legislation to
Give Californians a Fair Chance at Employment**

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(SACRAMENTO, CA) – Assemblymember Kevin McCarty (D – Sacramento), today introduced AB 1008, known as the Fair Chance Act, which will eliminate employment barriers for individuals formerly convicted of a crime. Historically known as, “Ban the Box,” this bill would prohibit a prospective public or private employer from asking a prospective employee if they had been convicted of a crime on an initial application for employment.

For decades, requiring job applicants to initially disclose their criminal history has been a prejudiced disqualifier for those seeking to break the cycle of criminal recidivism and enter California’s workforce. This employment barrier has particularly harmed African American and Latino former offenders, who have historically made up a majority of the state’s prison population and has suffered from higher unemployment rates in California.

“A former offender with a job, an income and hope for the future is less likely to reoffend,” said Assemblymember Shirley Weber (D-San Diego), a joint author of the bill. “Removing this barrier to employment is in everybody’s best interest.”

In 2015, President Barack Obama directed all federal agencies to “Ban the Box”, giving former offenders a fair chance to seek employment opportunities with the federal government. Currently, five states and several cities across the nation including Los Angeles and San Francisco have adopted fair chance hiring laws covering public and private employers. These laws have expanded job opportunities for former offenders, reducing unemployment among this population and helping to break the cycle of recidivism that costs California taxpayers billions of dollars each year.

“We need to expand job opportunities for all Californians, especially those who have served their time and are looking for a fair chance to enter the workforce,” said Assemblymember Kevin McCarty. “My AB 1008 will eliminate an arbitrary barrier to employment, reduce recidivism and give former offenders an opportunity to demonstrate their ability to become productive, contributing members of our society.”

AB 1008 will be considered by the California State Assembly in the Spring of 2017.

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Kevin McCarty represents California's 7th Assembly District, which include the cities of Sacramento, West Sacramento and unincorporated Sacramento County. McCarty serves as Chair of the Assembly Budget Subcommittee on Education Finance.