



RESOLUTION NO. 39228

1 BY REQUEST OF MAYOR STRICKLAND AND COUNCIL MEMBERS LONERGAN,
2 WALKER, AND WOODARDS

3 A RESOLUTION supporting “Ban the Box” by removing the question from the
4 City of Tacoma’s employment application software program (NEOGOV)
5 that asks “Have you been convicted of a felony within the last 10 years?”

6 WHEREAS there is a nationwide movement to “Ban the Box,” which refers
7 to the check box on applications asking whether a candidate has ever been
8 convicted of a serious crime, and

9 WHEREAS proponents argue that removing the question reduces an
10 unfair barrier to employment – the likelihood of being screened out early in the
11 process without further consideration of qualifications based on checking “yes” –
12 for those with criminal records, and

13 WHEREAS eliminating this question ensures that the candidates’
14 qualifications, rather than conviction records only, are considered in the early
15 screening process, and

16 WHEREAS current Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (“EEOC”)
17 guidelines relating to criminal history recommend against blanket disqualification
18 based on conviction, and further recommend that hiring managers consider the
19 specific offense and its relationship to the position for which the candidate
20 applied in determining whether the candidate is qualified for employment, and

21 WHEREAS the City’s current background check procedures reflect EEOC
22 guidelines, including obtaining criminal history records prior to hire, and
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WHEREAS candidates will be asked to disclose any criminal history issue as part of the process after a conditional offer of employment is made pending the background check, and

WHEREAS, for Police Department applicants, the criminal history question will continue to be asked early in the hiring process as part of the Personal History Questionnaire, and applicants must pass a background investigation and polygraph test, and

WHEREAS procedures may also differ for certain positions in the City Attorney's Office and Tacoma Municipal Court, and

WHEREAS there are currently 17 states and over 100 cities and counties that have taken steps to remove barriers to employment for qualified workers with records, including Seattle and Spokane; and

WHEREAS, in November 2012, Pierce County modified its employment application by removing the question, and

WHEREAS, at the June 16, 2015, Study Session, this matter was introduced for consideration by the City Council; Now, Therefore,



BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF TACOMA:

That the City Council hereby supports “Ban the Box” by removing the question “Have you been convicted of a felony within the last 10 years?” from the City of Tacoma’s employment application software program (NEOGOV).

Adopted _____

Mayor

Attest:

City Clerk

Approved as to form:

Deputy City Attorney