

American Friends Service Committee

Arizona Area Program

103 N. Park Avenue, Suite 111 Tucson, AZ 85716
520.623.9141

Caroline Isaacs, *Program Director* Matthew Lowen, *Program Coordinator*

November 9, 2015

Dear Members of the Pima County Board of Supervisors:

Please accept this letter in support of Resolution #2015-80, proposed Ban the Box policy. My name is Dr. Grace Gámez and I am the Criminal Justice Program Associate for the Arizona Area Program of the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC). AFSC is committed to the principles of nonviolence and justice, we support practice and policies that advance a fair and humane criminal justice system.

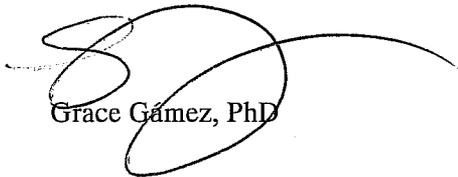
Several research studies find that returning community members require family support, community assistance, and economic opportunity to prevent recidivism. Access to employment is a critical element of this network of support.

Fair hiring practices including Ban the Box policies, can ease barriers folks with conviction histories face in securing employment. Research demonstrates that hiring discrimination takes place- 76% of the time- at the submission of a job application and that having personal contact with a potential employer reduces the negative affect of a conviction history by 15%; therefore, removing the impediment of a criminal record check box from initial applications, will allow qualified job seekers to make in-person contact with hiring authorities and thus increase their odds of gainful employment.

American Friends supports policies such as Ban the Box, because they demonstrate our greater human instincts for care and mercy. Therefore, we recommend that the Pima County Board of Supervisors approve the Ban the Box resolution, and join the 100 cities and counties nationally that have chosen to take a step towards equalizing the job market for formerly incarcerated and convicted people.

Thank you and please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Kindly,



Grace Gámez, PhD