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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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*******PRESS RELEASE*******

**San Francisco Human Rights Commission Issues Policy Brief
on Implementation of Fair Chance Legislation on
Employment and Housing**

*Policy Brief will be Released at Fourth Annual "Governing for Racial Equity"
Conference*

(San Francisco, CA) The San Francisco Human Rights Commission (HRC), in partnership with the National Employment Law Project (NELP), is proud to release "[Fair-Chance Implementation Case Studies for Government Agencies.](#)" a policy brief examining the innovative approaches and best practices used to develop and implement fair-chance laws in San Francisco, Seattle, and the District of Columbia.

"The HRC is extremely proud to release this publication, which offers a case study of how the City's Fair Chance Ordinance was created and explains the role which the HRC played in its passage," stated Commission Chair Susan Belinda Christian. "The report identifies effective ways to address hiring issues which unnecessarily and unfairly impact persons with arrest and conviction records. These efforts promote fairness, facilitate and recognize rehabilitation and strengthen our community. We hope that this publication will assist other jurisdictions in crafting their own Fair Chance Ordinances."

Under the leadership of Supervisors Jane Kim and Malia Cohen, San Francisco's Board of Supervisors passed the [Fair Chance Ordinance](#) in February 2014, regulating when and how criminal background checks are used in affordable housing and employment. The Office of Labor Standards and Enforcement (OLSE) enforces the employment component of the law and the HRC enforces the law for affordable housing providers. Several

major cities have passed similar fair-chance legislation, but San Francisco's law is one of the few nationwide that incorporates housing and employment.

“Many who have conviction records face tremendous barriers when seeking employment and housing. Discrimination based on prior record disproportionately impacts communities of color and pre-screening background inquiries can exclude and discourage qualified applicants without affording them a fair chance to be considered on an individualized basis,” said Zoë Polk, Director of Policy and Social Justice and policy brief co-author. “We will continue to work closely with the OLSE, the Mayors Office of Housing and Community Development, community stakeholders, housing providers, and employers to eliminate arbitrary bias against persons with arrest and conviction records.”

The policy brief reviews outreach, engagement and compliance strategies of the HRC, the Seattle Office of Civil Rights (SOCR), and the District of Columbia Office of Human Rights (OHR) In San Francisco, the HRC spearheaded the effort by issuing a letter to the Mayor and Board of Supervisors, highlighting the human rights impact of discrimination against people with criminal records. The HRC collaborated extensively with community members and offered no-cost training for employers and housing providers pre- and post-passage of the law which encouraged their compliance with the new policies.

The policy brief will be released at the [Governing for Racial Equity Conference](#) in Seattle, Washington on Thursday, June 11, 2015. Mrs. Polk will join Elliot Imse, DHR Director of Policy and Communications, Karina Bull, Interim Director Office of Labor Standards, SOCR, and Michelle Natividad Rodriguez, NELP Senior Staff Attorney and policy brief co-author in discussion on the policy brief on the “*Beyond Ban the Box: Strategies for Implementing and Enforcing Fair Chance Laws*” panel.

The HRC is proud to serve on the steering committee for the Governing for Racial Equity (GRE) Network, which is a partnership of government, education, and philanthropic entities, collaborating to address issues of racial equity. This partnership works to promote best practices for developing, implementing, and enforcing policies that promote racial equity in their cities.

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