City Council – Action Request Form November 20, 2017 The City Manager

From: Evan Raleigh, Director of Business Inclusion and Advancement

Council Action Requested:

Date:

To:

Adoption of a Resolution Affirming the City of Winston-Salem's "Ban the Box" Policy

Strategic Focus Area: Safe and Secure Community **Strategic Objective:** Reduce Crime and Fear of Crime

Strategic Plan Action Item: Strengthen Re-entry and Diversion Initiatives

Key Work Item: N/A



Summary of Information:

In the early 2000s, grassroots organizers in San Francisco and Boston began urging local governments to remove questions about convictions from job applications so that applicants could be judged first on their qualifications. The City of Winston-Salem also recognized the importance of eliminating barriers to employment for citizens with criminal histories and understood the need to provide them with avenues to gainful employment as a means of reducing recidivism and suppressing crime in the community.

In recognition of this critical need in our community, the Mayor and City Council adopted the policy of "banning the box" on applications for all city jobs, making the City of Winston-Salem one among more than 150 local jurisdictions nationwide that have adopted such policies to-date. In furtherance of the goal of assisting returning citizens in their transition back to society and making gainful employment opportunities available to them, the Mayor and City Council supported the creation of the Successful Outcomes After Release (S.O.A.R) initiative in 2014 with an initial allocation of \$100,000. In addition to providing grants annually to organizations that provide educational, vocational, therapeutic, and employment training programs to the local returning citizen community, the S.O.A.R initiative also provides funding for the city to hire

Committee Action:			
Committee	Public Safety 11/13/17	Action	Approval
For	Unanimous	Against	
Remarks:		_	

between 8 and 16 returning citizens annually in temporary capacities. To-date, more than three dozen citizens with criminal histories have been afforded opportunities for gainful employment by virtue of the program, many of whom have secured full-time employment with the City of Winston-Salem or with other organizations as result of their hard work and dedication.

This item requests the adoption of a resolution which reaffirms support for the city's policy of "banning the box" and directs city staff to explore additional measures to enhance second chance employment opportunities for local returning citizens. The item also encourages other local employers to join the city in its efforts to provide paths to gainful employment for returning citizens.