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For Immediate Release

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## **Institute Applauds Governor Holcomb's Decision to 'Ban the Box' for Indiana's Public Jobs**

Move Will Reduce Employment Barriers for 17% of Hoosiers

**Indianapolis**— Today Indiana Governor Eric Holcomb [announced](#) that he will issue an Executive Order to 'ban the box' (to remove questions about prior arrest and criminal history from job applications) for future Indiana state employees. The Institute applauds Governor Holcomb's decision, which will reduce barriers to employment for more than 1.12 million Hoosiers with records in the state's criminal history file, or over 17% of the state's population[1]. With the Executive Order announced today, Indiana would become the [27th state](#) to adopt a statewide 'ban the box' policy.

The Governor signaled that he will pair this Executive Order with signing SB 312, which will preempt cities and local governments from passing their own 'ban the box' and other 'fair chance' hiring ordinances. The Institute opposes the local preemption in SB 312 and believes that on its own the bill failed to provide protections for communities like Lawrenceburg who suffer from the [opioid epidemic and high incarceration rates](#), as well as for Hoosier minorities who are [disproportionately affected](#) by incarceration. However, we thank Governor Holcomb for heeding the [request from a dozen statewide organizations](#) (including the Institute) asking him not to sign the bill unless accompanied by an order like the one announced today. "Governor Holcomb's announcement that Indiana will 'ban the box' for future state employees is a positive step for all Hoosiers," said Senior Policy Analyst Andrew Bradley. "Ensuring fair chance hiring opportunities isn't only necessary to move our workforce and economy to the next level, it's the just thing to do for Hoosiers and their communities."

Although today's announcement applies only to Indiana's public sector jobs, it signals an acknowledgement of the importance of giving a fair chance for employment to people with prior criminal records in hiring throughout the state. We encourage the Governor's staff to look to [best practices](#) for crafting his forthcoming Executive Order, and to [examples](#) from other states (including Kentucky and Virginia), which provide helpful language and are based on standards developed by the EEOC. Specifically, we encourage the order to remove questions about an applicant's conviction and criminal history from the state job application, and to delay asking these questions until after applicants can be judged based on their skills and fitness for the job at hand. Doing so will ensure that Indiana's state hiring decisions will not be based on prior criminal history unless job-related. We are confident Governor Holcomb can create a strong Executive Order that not only does the right thing in line with Hoosier traditions of justice and fairness, but also provides leadership by example to other public and private sector employers throughout the state.

The Institute thanks Governor Holcomb for his announcement today, and looks forward to working with him in the future to provide opportunities for Hoosier families by strengthening Indiana's workforce, communities, and economy.

[1] U.S. Department of Justice Office of Justice Programs Bureau of Justice Statistics Survey of State Criminal History Information Systems, 2012. Figure reduced by 30% to deal with duplicate multi-state files.  
<https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/bjs/grants/244563.pdf>

## **About the Indiana Institute for Working Families**

The Indiana Institute for Working Families – a program of the Indiana Community Action Association (INCAA) – conducts research and promotes public policies to help Hoosier families achieve and maintain economic self-sufficiency. The Institute is the only statewide program in Indiana that combines research and policy analysis on federal and state legislation, public policies, and programs impacting low-income working families. The Institute achieves its work through advocacy and education, and through national, statewide, and community partnerships. The Institute was founded in 2004.

## **About the Indiana Community Action Association (IN-CAA)**

The Indiana Community Action Association, Inc. (IN-CAA) is a statewide not-for-profit membership corporation, incorporated in the State of Indiana in 1970. IN-CAA's members or Network is comprised of Indiana's 22 Community Action Agencies (CAAs), which serve all of Indiana's 92 counties. IN-CAA envisions a state with limited or no poverty, where its residents have decent, safe, and sanitary living conditions, and where resources are available to help low income individuals attain self-sufficiency. IN-CAA serves as an advocate and facilitator of policy, planning and programs to create solutions and share responsibility as leaders in the war against poverty. Therefore, it is IN-CAA's mission is to help the state's Community Action Agencies address the conditions of poverty through: training and technical assistance; developing models for service delivery; and providing resources to help increase network capacity.