



## U.S. Department of Justice

### United States Attorney Southern District of Alabama

Riverview Plaza  
63 So. Royal Street, Suite 600  
Mobile, Alabama 36602

Phone: 251/441-5845  
Fax: 251/441-5051

January 27, 2012

Dear Employers and SAWDC Members,

According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics there are currently 2.3 million people incarcerated in prisons and jails across America. Approximately 32,000 of those inmates are incarcerated in the State of Alabama. Nationally, ninety-seven percent of the offenders in jail today will be released and then return to the communities from which they came. Statistics also show that thirty percent of adult offenders released from state prisons are re-arrested within the first six months of their release. Within three years of release from prison this percentage goes up to sixty-seven percent or two out of three ex-offenders returning to prison. Sadly, revocations are the fastest growing category of prison admissions in that parole violators account for thirty-five percent of new prison admissions today as compared to only seventeen percent in 1980.

Just in the Southern District of Alabama alone, in the federal system, between the years of 2008-2010, 328 ex-offenders were revoked for violating the terms of their supervised release and sent back to prison. The cost to the American taxpayer to incarcerate those 328 ex-offenders over that three year period of time amounted to \$9.2 million annually. If these same 328 ex-offenders had been successful on supervised release it would have only cost the American taxpayer roughly \$1.3 million.

Why do so many ex-offenders become repeat offenders? Statistics compiled by the Administrative Office of the Courts in Washington D.C., indicate that ex-offender employment is a critical factor in whether recently released federal inmates are successful upon their release. Of the 262,000 federal prisoners that were released from federal prison between calendar years 2002-2006, 50% of those who could not secure any employment during the time of their supervised release (generally three years) committed a new crime or violated the terms of their release and were sent back to prison. Eighty-eight percent of those who were able to obtain employment for some portion of their supervised release term were successful in not being returned to prison. While an astonishing 93% of those who were able to secure employment during the entirety of their supervised release term were able to successfully reintegrate back into society and did not return to prison.

Employers can benefit from hiring ex-offenders as well because there are several programs that can help employers bottom line - making a profit. For example, employers who hire ex-offenders within one year of their release from prison can receive a \$2,500 Work Opportunity Tax Credit per ex-offender hired. Through a Department of Labor program administered through Mobile Works, employers can be reimbursed for 50% of an ex-offender's on-the-job-training time for up to six weeks. In a similar fashion ex-offenders who lack

vocational skills can receive \$2,000-\$8,000 in Department of Labor monies in order to obtain vocational training that would be attractive to potential employers. Lastly, through the Mobile Weed & Seed program individual ex-offenders can be insured or bonded for up to \$5,000 in the workplace at no cost to the employer or ex-offender.

Hiring ex-offenders puts them on the path to good citizenship and the greater community gains the tangential benefits of less crime in the community as well as safer neighborhoods in which to live, work and raise our children. Hiring ex-offenders is a win-win proposition!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kenyan R. Brown". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Kenyan R. Brown  
United States Attorney  
Southern District of Alabama