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## PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release  
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### **NERC Plans Panel Discussion on Hiring Individuals With Criminal Records**

LAS VEGAS, NV — The Nevada Equal Rights Commission (NERC) is partnering with the Latin Chamber of Commerce to conduct a panel discussion educating employers about hiring individuals with criminal backgrounds. The event will take place Friday, January 20, 2017, at 10 a.m. at the Texas Station and will be held in conjunction with the Latin Chamber's career expo from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. and the business luncheon from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., with keynote speaker Michael Richards, Ph.D., president of the College of Southern Nevada.

The goal of the panel discussion is to give employers the opportunity to hear from experts who can enlighten them on the benefits of hiring an individual who is qualified, but has a criminal background said Kevin Hooks, NERC chairman and CEO of the Las Vegas Urban League.

"Individuals who have criminal backgrounds make up an untapped talent pool that can bring value to the workforce," Hooks said. "Additionally, we want to provide legal guidance to employers to reinforce their confidence in hiring individuals who have made mistakes, but deserve another chance to be productive members of the workforce."

Topics will also include the impact of failing to hire people with criminal backgrounds on economic development, civil rights of people with criminal records, and racial disparities in hiring practices. Panelists will also address the ban the box initiative, the effort by some lawmakers to have employers remove the question about felony convictions from their job applications, said Kara Jenkins, NERC administrator who is serving as moderator.

"Engaging the business community by addressing any areas of concern as it relates to workers who have earned a second chance will hopefully encourage successful hiring efforts that will benefit all Nevadans," Jenkins said. "Moreover, the goal to overcoming any bias or discrimination against individuals with a criminal background begins with an open and candid discussion."

To register to attend visit <http://lvfcc.starchapter.com>. The event is open to the media.

### **WORKSHOP PANELISTS**

**Kevin E. Hooks** is currently the chair of the Nevada Equal Rights Commission, appointed by Governor Brian Sandoval. Mr. Hooks serves also as the president and CEO of the Las Vegas Urban League. The mission of the Las Vegas Urban League is to empower communities and ensure equal opportunity for low income citizens. It establishes programs and support policies that address social and economic issues faced by low income and minority residents of Clark County Nevada, and its outlying areas. It collaborates with community members on strategies and techniques to implement changes that bring about opportunity and enables citizens to secure economic self-reliance.

**Maurice Emsellem**, serves as director of the National Employment Law Project's (NELP) Access and Opportunity Program. NELP is a research and advocacy organization that delivers on the nation's promise of economic opportunity for low-wage and unemployed workers. Mr. Emsellem specializes in government systems of support for unemployed workers and the employment rights of people with criminal records.

**Richard Burgamy, Ph.D** serves as the director for the Las Vegas office of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. Dr. Burgamy formerly worked for the Department of Justice as an Equal Employment Opportunity counselor, facilitating diversity management for federal employees.

**Arte Nathan** served as chief human resources officer for Steve Wynn's gaming companies from 1983-2006; opening casinos in Atlantic City, Las Vegas, Mississippi and China. While employed by Wynn, Mr. Nathan was responsible for recruiting hundreds for people with criminal backgrounds and learned first-hand how to successfully integrate them into productive careers. He also served as the initial chair of the Nevada Governor's Workforce Investment Board, overseeing the launch of One-Stop Career Centers throughout the state. Additionally, Mr. Nathan currently serves as a board member for Hope for Prisoners, a Las Vegas non-profit organization that facilitates reentry and reintegration services to men, women, and young adults who are exiting various segments of the judicial system.

**Manny Lamarre** serves as the executive director of the Governor's Office of Workforce Innovation (OWINN) and a member of the Governor's Workforce Development Board. OWINN has the mission of creating a skilled, diverse, and aligned workforce by engaging with K-12 and postsecondary educational institutions, employers, and workforce entities to create statewide career pathways and develop strategies and policies that strengthen the workforce system.

**Shellie Keller, Ph.D** currently serves as associate vice president of Academic Success in Academic Affairs at College of Southern Nevada. Prior to accepting the AVP role in Academic Affairs, she served as a retention specialist, advisor, and director of Centers of Academic Success. Dr. Keller has extensive knowledge of helping students overcome obstacles in order to achieve academic, personal, and career goals.



DETR is comprised of the Employment Security Division, Equal Rights Commission, Rehabilitation Division, and the Research and Analysis Bureau. DETR oversees the Nevada JobConnect System to provide training and job placement services to job seekers and to assist employers in hiring practices. It also supports economic development efforts through improving Nevada's workforce.