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**Reverend Onie Cooper**  
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**Chairman of the Northern Nevada Martin Luther King Jr. Commission**  
**Associate Pastor of Second Baptist Church**

April 10, 2003

State of Nevada Senate  
Legislative Building  
401 S. Carson Street  
Carson City, Nevada 89701-4747

Dear Members of the Senate:

Re: **SB 430**

I'm requesting each of you to vote for the passage of **AB 337 & SB 430**. As an activist in Reno for thirty four (34) years I have had many Afro-Americans and others complain that they cannot vote – and equally – cannot get a job. For, many agencies and businesses will not hire felons even when the felon does not apply for the specific job. Example, just this week an Afro-American was hired as a receptionist, she worked for several weeks before being asked to fill out a form, which asked if she was a felon, and after about a week she was fired. This woman has two children. Now she is looking for another job.

This particular felon was charged and convicted (served no prison time) and is being stripped of any opportunity of employment. The system forces all felons to be counter productive, and then they are considered subhuman by society.

As responsible members of the legislature, you should draft and pass a law (now) during this session to stop this grave injustice. Once a person has paid their debt to society, that person, should at least, be able to earn a living by getting a honest job. To allow for gainful employment (for felons) should be an objective of all decent people.

To me, this is discrimination, the same as against handicap, race, seniors, women, and etc.

I respectfully request that you draft and pass legislation that will allow these people a life, and respect for themselves and others. Locking them out of the mainstream has not and cannot work.

Respectfully your,

  
Reverend Onie Cooper