

PRESS RELEASE

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**Congresswoman Barbara Lee to Visit  
East Bay Community Law Center's Criminal Records Clinic  
at Oakland Courthouse**

Who: Congresswoman Barbara Lee (D-Oakland)

What: Congresswoman Lee will visit the East Bay Community Law Center's recently established Criminal Records Clinic at the Self-Help Center at Wiley W. Manuel Courthouse in Oakland. Congresswoman Lee will report on ongoing efforts to help probationers and formerly incarcerated people address the barriers resulting from their criminal records.

Where: Wiley Manuel Courthouse, 661 Washington Street, Oakland, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Self Help Center

When: Thursday, July 7, 9:30am

Berkeley, California, July 5, 2005 — The East Bay Community Law Center (EBCLC) is delighted to welcome Congresswoman Barbara Lee to its new Criminal Records Clinic, Thursday, July 7, 9:30 a.m. EBCLC established the Criminal Records Clinic to assist formerly incarcerated individuals living in Alameda County. The discrimination faced by individuals with criminal convictions undermines their reintegration into society and the economic and social development of the entire community.

“Criminal records often result in profound barriers to employment, education, housing and civic engagement,” explained Margaret L. Richardson, attorney in the Decriminalization of Poverty Practice at the East Bay Community Law Center, who administers the criminal records clinic. “Assistance in cleaning up such records as provided for under state law can make a tremendous difference to individuals who are seeking to overcome these barriers.”

EBCLC is the primary provider of free criminal records remedies in Alameda County. In April 2005, as part of an ongoing, collaborative effort to remove the social and legal barriers to the successful reintegration faced by formerly incarcerated people, Congresswoman Barbara Lee, the Alameda County Courts, EBCLC, All Of Us Or None and other county organizations

convened a summit at Laney College in Oakland, where some 900 people attended. More than 80 private bar attorneys volunteered to help attendees. Since the Summit in April, EBCLC staff, students and volunteer attorneys have assisted clients in getting more than 160 criminal convictions dismissed.

Because of the needs identified at the summit, EBCLC opened the Criminal Records Clinic in May 2005 to assist formerly incarcerated individuals in Alameda County. In addition to the collaboration of the District Attorney's Office, the Public Defender and the Superior Court administrative staff, the clinic has benefited from the participation of pro bono attorneys from the law firms of Gibson Dunn, Morrison & Foerster, Skadden Arps, Reed Smith, Orrick, and Morgan Lewis. Jeff Selbin, Executive Director of the East Bay Community Law Center says, "This Criminal Records Clinic demonstrates the potential of public-private partnerships to increase access to justice for the benefit of our community. The success of this clinic— and of all EBCLC's efforts to advance justice and expand opportunity — depends on the active and generous participation of these collaborative partners."

Law students at Boalt Hall founded the East Bay Community Law Center in 1988 with the dual mission of providing legal services to low-income clients and clinical legal education opportunities for law students. EBCLC is the largest provider of free civil legal assistance to the poor in Alameda County and a nationally recognized poverty law clinic, with services including eviction defense and housing advocacy, income and employment support, HIV/AIDS law, and community economic development. EBCLC's work helps to build a community that is more healthy, secure, productive, and hopeful.