

Gov. Brown customarily grants pardons and commutations around Christmas. Time to get your campaign going. Here are some helpful guidelines if you solicit letters of support.

-----

The letter should be addressed directly to the Governor:

Honorable Edmond G. Brown, Jr.  
Governor of the State of California  
State Capitol Building  
Sacramento, CA 95814

To the kind of people Considering Writing Letters in Support of the Commutation Application of NAME

An application to the Governor's Legal Affairs Office is currently being prepared on behalf of NAME, re-requesting that his sentence be commuted such that he can be afforded a parole hearing as soon as possible (upon a determination by the parole board that he does not currently pose an unreasonable risk to public safety,) and or immediately released back into the community. Because of the person NAME has demonstrated himself to be, numerous people have expressed a willingness, if not eagerness, to support that application with letters, and we are providing the following information that you may find helpful in drafting one. Please bear in mind that there is no strict formula for such support letters, and you should feel completely free to express yourself as you see fit. The most important thing is to convey honestly held opinions and beliefs about NAME to assist the Governor's Office in understanding that he is worthy of the act of grace he seeks. The following is meant as guidelines only and not to put any words in anyone's mouth. The words should come from you.

The letter should be relatively short, preferably one or two pages, but certainly no more than three. As a general proposition, the elements of the letter should include:

1. Background information about yourself. This does not have to be very detailed, but should quickly give some sense to the reader of who you are (e.g., m., "I began my career as a correctional officer some 15 years ago, the last 5 of which I've served as a lieutenant in the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation." "I am currently a sergeant in the Oakland Police Department." "I live in San Francisco and am the mother of two teenage boys.")
2. The basis of ability to say anything about NAME (e.g., "Mr. NAME has been a regular attendee for the past 2 years at a workshop I teach at San Quentin State Prison"; "I have interacted with NAME on a monthly basis over the past 3 years, during which time we have both participated in the same volunteer program.")
3. A description of observations of him (e.g., "I have seen how diligent Mr. NAME is in performing his duties."; "I have seen firsthand how Mr. NAME works hard to improve the lives of his fellow inmates."). These should be as detailed as possible and hopefully can include concrete illustrations of his positive character traits. If you have known him long enough to have witnessed his maturation, that would be a subject worthy of comment.
4. A statement of opinions of him based on observations (e.g., "I know Mr. NAME to be a fine young man, who has shown nothing but utmost respect for staff, his fellow inmates, and the institution's rules."; "Based on what I have seen of him, I believe NAME to be a sincere individual who has striven mightily to make the most productive use of his time and the best of his situation."; "I have found NAME to be an intelligent, thoughtful fellow who I would not hesitate to invite into my home.")
5. A statement of support for his commutation application (e.g., "I cannot support strongly enough Mr. NAME application for a commutation of sentence. If any inmate is worthy of a (second) chance, it is he. I have absolutely no doubt that, were Mr. NAME given that opportunity, he not only would not reoffend, but would lead a productive life that would contribute to the betterment of the community").

Please make three copies of the letter but DO NOT mail the letter to the Governor's office, and return it to the who you are writing for. Thank you