

Justice - Today

“Creative Alternatives in Criminal Justice”

WE ARE SEEKING YOUR SUPPORT

The Massachusetts Bar Association Clemency Task Force has submitted their proposed **CLEMENCY GUIDELINES** to the Governor's Office for review and consideration. We believe that upon approval or modification of those guidelines, an unknown number of Massachusetts prisoners who are serving sentences of life without parole (**LWOP**) will apply for a commutation of sentence.

Based on information provided to us by the Lifers' Group at the Norfolk prison, we have prepared profiles of six **LWOP** prisoners who, given their unique circumstances, are highly qualified for serious consideration of a commutation of their sentence.

This position is based upon the following facts:

- Each of those profiled meets the criteria outlined in the MBA guidelines.
- Each of those we have profiled (**and the other dozen or so like them**) have been incarcerated for in excess of forty or fifty years.
- All of these individuals previously served a significant part of their current sentence in either a **“minimum”** or **“pre-release”** security correctional setting.
- All of these individuals previously participated in a number of **unescorted furloughs** back into our communities without incident.
- All of these individuals are in their 70's and have long ago aged out of criminal thinking.
- All have long ago accepted complete **responsibility** for the crime they committed.
- All have expressed sincere **remorse** for their crime.
- All have participated in extensive **rehabilitative programming** offered by the Department of Correction.
- A Number of these individuals served in the **Armed Forces** of the United States, **some during a time of war.**

We are aware of the fact that previous liberal administrations neglected to employ this valuable tool **(commutations)**. However, after twenty five years of inaction, Governor Charles Baker brought this process back to life when he granted not one, but three commutations of sentences for deserving prisoners who were serving **LWOP** terms.

We now believe that there is a reasonable probability that Governor Maura Healy will follow her predecessors lead. Should the Governor decide to revitalize the under used commutation process those involved with efforts to reform our criminal justice system should do everything possible to ensure success.

When contacting others it is important to remind them that a commutation of sentence **"does not"** forgive a crime. **It mealy shortens the length of a sentence.** Also, those serving a life without parole sentence **(LWOP)** who are recommended for a commutation of sentence **must appear before the Advisory Board of Pardons** and convince seven professional board members that they are **rehabilitated** and **no longer pose a threat to public safety.** Should they be granted a commutation, they will remain under **strict supervision for the rest of their life.**

It is with these thoughts in mind that we seek your support. Please contact anyone and everyone; politicians, church groups, social organizations, media outlets, friends, family, etc. that you believe will help advance this cause. **Commutations of sentence are an integral part of our criminal justice system. Let's restore this valuable underused tool and make the Massachusetts system of justice a system that we can all be proud of.**

Your support is deeply appreciated.