

From Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Date _____

The Honorable J.B. Pritzker
Office of the Governor
207 State House
Springfield, IL 62706

Dear Governor Pritzker,

I am writing to you as a supporter of criminal justice reform and asking you to grant full pardons to all incarcerated individuals where the Illinois Torture Inquiry and Relief Commission has determined there is evidence of unlawful coercion, torture and wrongful convictions. This has resulted in the suffering of innocent persons and their families and loved ones. I am asking you to mark a turning point in this state's legacy and to stand on the right side of history, just as your predecessor Governor George Ryan did, granting pardons to death row inmates where evidence convinced him of their innocence. Recognizing a broken, failing system, and using executive power to correct an inhuman injustice, is a powerful opportunity afforded you, our Governor.

From 1972, well into the 1990s, over 100 people were tortured by former Chicago Police Commander Jon Burge and detectives under his command at Police Areas Two and Three in Chicago, Illinois. Many of those victims of torture under the watch of Cmd. Burge are still waiting for their chance to tell their story, but due to the bureaucracy of the system are still denied their "day in court."

There are those whose conviction has been vacated, as in the case of Gerald Reed, but are still incarcerated. To quote Ms. Armanda Shackelford, the mother of Gerald Reed, "*Some of the prisons don't have clean water. Some have been tortured so bad that their physical conditions have gotten so poor that it turns life threatening. And in order for them to get something done about it, it takes years. For my son, it took them 26 years to decide to start his surgery, and his surgery has yet to be completed. He has suffered for years, and his health is poor. It's not quite as bad as it was before, but ultimately he shouldn't be going through any pain, because he shouldn't be there.*"

To quote Regina Russell, a steadfast activist and supporter of reform, "*The mental, physical, and emotional abuse the inmates and their families endure every day is simply inhumane.*" I'm appealing to you, as a resident of Illinois and as a believer that criminal justice reform is a necessary step towards a just and peaceful society, to take a historic leadership step that will demonstrate there is still hope in our society.

Thank you for listening.

Sincerely yours,

(signed)

CC:

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