

PardonOHenry.org

The president quotes him while pardoning a turkey. Pardons are for people, too.

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The postal service will issue a stamp on his 150th birthday, but in many states he couldn't even vote if alive today.

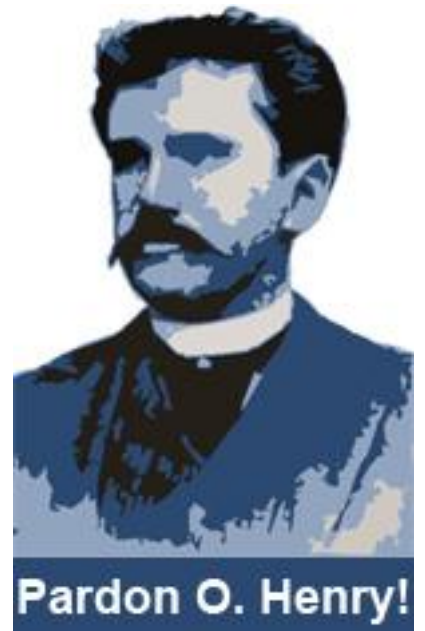
Why Pardon O. Henry?

America needs the pardon power reinvigorated now more than ever. The United States over the last 20 years has transformed into the incarceration capital of the planet, housing five percent of the world's population and 25 percent of its prisoners. Meanwhile, Barack Obama has given fewer pardons than any president since James Garfield, who was assassinated seven months into office.

This petition seeks to call attention to the waning use of executive clemency in the justice system by invoking the plight of America's most famous short-story writer, who was convicted on embezzlement charges at an Austin bank in 1897. O. Henry, then William Porter, always claimed innocence, and some biographers believe that is true. Regardless, pardons are not just for the innocent.

Alexander Hamilton in Federalist Paper 74 (1788) wrote that, "The criminal code of every country partakes so much of necessary severity, that without an easy access to exceptions in favor of unfortunate guilt, justice would wear a countenance too sanguinary and cruel." True to that prediction, as executive clemency has withered in use, America has seen the criminal justice system's cruel countenance blossom in full -- prisons overflowing with petty offenders, families broken, innocent people released after decades thanks to DNA tests that remain difficult to obtain.

Not only does the writer deserve recognition by the President in the form of a posthumous pardon, his cause should be honored by anyone who thinks justice should be tempered with mercy and our over-incarceration epidemic requires a constitutional injection of mercy and forgiveness to cure its ills. Please visit:



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