

Jeffrey B. Kessel
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FROM:

Jeffrey B. Kessel

DATE:

Jan. 1, 1994

Board of Prison Terms
John W. Gillis, Chairman
428 J. Street, 6th Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814
916/322-6366

Dear Mr. Gillis and board members:

RE: PRISONER, P.F. LAZOR, NUMBER C-73842

This letter concerns upcoming parole consideration of PF Lazor, and as I sign this letter I know that I also speak for many, many people besides myself.

I consider myself among those members of society who are "tough on crime" and who abhor the past, excessively lenient policies of authorities who repeatedly freed hardened criminals who resumed preying on our society. Those policies proved irresponsible and the "tough on crime" changes have been generally laudable.

However, many of us, as responsible members of society, regard it as equally irresponsible and tragic for parole authorities hesitating to release those few and far between prisoners who should not have received long or indefinite sentences, or should never have been imprisoned in the first place.

We feel the one extreme is as dangerous and inappropriate for society as the other.

I am well aware that PF Lazor's conviction for murder was obtained by reprehensible exaggerations, distortion and falsification of critical trial evidence, taking advantage of his good-natured trust in our system until his imprisonment.

I am fully aware that PF Lazor shot a man who viciously attacked him in his home in Los Gatos -- a scene which happens weekly throughout our country, including California, where criminal charges are not even filed. Often the resident is even applauded by society who, along with our political representatives are now recognizing the appropriateness - albeit unfortunate need - of such defensive action.

I am not advocating gun usage; however I am aware that PF Lazor's gun was legal and properly registered with authorities. I also know his exemplary background of having no involvement in crime; he has never been among the criminal element that we do ask parole authorities to keep in prison.

In fact, I and many others are aware of PF Lazor's many ongoing contributions to our communities: to his church, fundraising for the handicapped and other needy causes, providing wholesome entertainment in the performing arts, establishing community writers' groups, helping to establish neighborhood crime watches while educating in defense against crime, speaking against crime on public radio, visiting the elderly and the ailing in hospitals, volunteering his time for emergency rescue work, and many other socially enhancing causes. I am informed he has even put his safety and life at risk for the lifesaving of others.

Social responsibility dictates that this is not the kind of man the parole board should keep in prison any longer. Ten years has already been excessive. His space can and should be used for real criminals still plaguing our streets who are a menace to society. PF Lazor has consistently been an asset to his community.

And it is no surprise that he would have tremendous difficulty in prison; especially considering the contemptible tactics utilized to obtain his conviction, and his incompatibility with the prison culture. Rather than deem this type of man's prison troubles an indicator of a troublesome disposition in society, the opposite might be more realistic. I would not expect one who was so well-adjusted to normal society to be fit for prison life, just as those who seem "at home" in prison society are frequently the repeat offenders unsuitable for returning to our communities.

Despite a problematic prison term, PF Lazor has never been problematic to society. He should be released before imprisonment takes any further toll. His highly unfortunate and tragic defensive shooting was surely a once in a lifetime situation, which likely would not have resulted in prison had he defended the safety or life of another helpless victim at the scene.

This case is a prime example of occasional errors of justice in the courts. Consequently, "the people of California" --and of other states as well-- plead as I do, for you to exercise the authority vested in you, by releasing PF Lazor back into our community now.

Your consideration of our wishes, as society's constituents who rely on your responsible representation, is very much appreciated.

Jeffrey B. Kessel

*Christian
Mayor
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