

Scott A. Walker #12060
Goose Creek Correctional Center
22301 west Alsop Road
Wasilla, AK 99654

February, 26, 2024

To: Senator Loki Tobin
State Capitol Room 11
Juneau, AK 99801

Hello, my name is Scott Walker. I have been incarcerated since June 11, 1981, when I had just turned 19. Over the last 43 years I have witnessed first-hand the many changes that have occurred within the Alaska Legislature, Courts, and Dept. of Corrections concerning criminology.

I am writing in support of S.B. 176, and hope that my testimony and input may help. The essence of my letter is to bring back rehabilitation and redemption to State politics. I personally struggle with loss of hope due to the Parole Board's inability to take rehabilitation into account.

Our Alaska Constitution supports the ideology of a second chance in the form of discretionary parole, it also fuels this idea by making rehabilitation a "right".

Before I get into my personal history I would like to share some thoughts on Parole.

I understand that releasing inmates with violent crime convictions early is unsavory. However, it is statistically proven that recidivism is extremely low for offenders who served 15+ years straight. There is also a financial outlook. Currently, the P.B. is automatically giving 10 year continuances for violent crimes. This means an automatic cost of approx. 60,000 x 10 yrs = 600,000 dollars for each 10 year continuance. If paroles are completely denied there will be additional costs for the always increasing aged prison population. Also, when you take away hope you increase the propensity for an individual to not rehabilitate.

I was originally charged and then acquitted of 2 counts of murder. I am convicted of 2 counts of Kidnapping, 1st degree Rob, burglary, and theft. I am serving a composite sentence of 89 yrs.

In 2012 I was eligible for discretionary parole. My Parole Officer endorsed my release, along with other correctional professionals. See Attached: Pg. 9 Parole Progress Report, and letters from Dennis Perry, and Kristie Willean.

The P.B. declined my parole officer's recommendation and issued me a 10 yr continuance. See EX 1, pg.1 With pre-conditions that I complete Substance abuse Treatment, Pre-release, Victim Impact, and recommended that I attain a psychological evaluation.[I feel inclined to interject that I had attempted to complete 2 of these classes up to 5 years before the 2012 hearing but S.C.C.C. did not offer them, at that time, unless they were Court or P.B. ordered or if you were within a year of release, and Victim Impact was not offered at all.]

In the 2012 P.B. summary there was no substantial reason for a 10 year continuance, other than wanting me to continue formal programming. (EX 1, pg. 2-3).

I filed a reconsideration on Sept. 10, 2012 (EX 1, pg.4-6)with a psych-eval. See attached by Larry Maile Alaska licensed (#AA0392)

The P.B. responded by reducing my continuance from 10 years to 8years.(EX 1 pg. 7-8)

I wrote back, thanking the P.B. for the reduction, but asking them for clarification on the reasoning for the now 8 years continuance.(EX 1, pg. 9)

They denied my request and gave a vague referal to the serverity of the crime. (EX 1, pg10)

I filed a Post-conviction relief contending the P.B. did not comply with law under A.S. 33.16.130c to which the State conceded. (EX 1, pg. 15-18) Judge Saxby, ordered the P.B. to adequately explain it's reason(s) for not granting discretionary parole (EX 1, pg19). The P.B. complied with the court's order on January 7, 2014(EX 1, pg.20-21)

The P.B.'s initial 2012 summary did not address the reason for my continuance. Twice I asked specifically for the reasoning. It was not until court ordered did the P.B. come back with their 'now' most commonly used go to for everyone's 10 year continuances, that it would diminish the severity of the crime (33.16.100(a)(4))

On JULY 14, 2020 I went in front of the P.B. for my continuation hearing. Since the 2012 hearing I had completed the pre-conditions LSSAT, Victim Impact, Pre-Release, and obtained the psych-eval. Additionally, I completed: Thought patterns for a sucessful career 16 weeks, 48 week offender program, Changing Offender Behavior, SAMHSA's Anger Management, NCRG;Work-keys, Parenting, UAF DEVM-60 Pre-Algebra, UAF HIST F-100 Western Civ, UAF HLTH F-203 Science of Nutrition, LSU Math1021 Advanced Alebra, NCCer Construction Site safety Orientation, NCCER Applied Construction Math,NCCER core curriculum and beginner Piano.

I have maintained employment as Education Tutor (6.5 yrs), Orientation Designer and Facilitator (9 months), Custodian for Admin, records, and Intake for (4.5 yrs), Voluntarily Co-facilitated a Mindfulness Yoga Class (2 yrs). Additionally, I continually mentor and aid others with anything within my capability.

Other than my completion of the pre-conditions and other aforementioned accomplishments, an incident report from 2013 (for having medication that was prescribed to me), and the additional (10 reduced to 8 years) served, no new information was presented to the P.B. that had not already been considered by the initial hearing on Sept 10, 2012. (EX 1, pg.22-25)

I felt slighted by my G.C.C.C. Parole Officer assigned to my continuation hearing. I had never seen her before and who only saw me for 2 ten minute sessions before my hearing. She basically would not discuss my case, saying she would only go by what she felt the P.B. would do.

I invite you to look at the perspectives of other Correction Officials who had contact with me over decades. One was Claire Sullivan (She has a Master's in psychology, worked Army Intelligence before Corrections, retired as Deputy Commissioner of AK DOC), Who I had about 20 hours interaction with prior to my initial hearing. Bryan Brandenburg (Prior Director AK DOC), John Sundeen (Prior head of Mental Health of GCCC), and Rebecca Scales (prior mental health clinician) Please see their attached Letters.

After doing my 10 reduced to 8 years, the 2020 Board told me to do the remainder of my sentence due to the severity of the crime. When I received my paperwork it said, "Parole Denied-serve the remainder of the sentence", then below, Other: May re-apply in 10 years (EX 1, pg. 26-28)

I understand the magnitude of my crime. I would give anything to undo all the horrible damage done. But Alas, that is not possible. I understand the desire to try to assuage pain by inflicting pain.

But does that really work? My Victims have all the right to hate. Although, I always pray that they could forgive, not for me, but for them.

Our Federal and State constitutions concerning criminality are supposed to be based on reformation and redemption. This was/is brought forth by Christian principles. I would like to hope that we as a State and Nation can stay steady on this thought process.

In the P.B.'s 2020 summary they stated that I have a good life in prison. I challenge, is there such a thing as prison is a good life?

Senate Bill 176 should be passed in order to give those who are truly remorseful, and earn credibility as a contributing Non-criminal member of society a second chance. And to get this chance while they are still capable of taking care of themselves upon release.

Thank You for your Time and consideration

Sincerely,


Scott A. Walker

P.S. Thank you so-much for initiating this Bill.

Senator, Löki Tobin

My name is Ariel Patrick, I have been in prison for over fourteen years. I am writing to encourage you to support and pass SB 176.

I have been eligible for discretionary parole since 2020 but remain incarcerated. I am a first time offender with a strong support network eagerly awaiting my release. I have been seen by the parole board twice and filed many reconsiderations. Through my lengthy incarceration I have proven my dedication to recovery and rehabilitation. Because I have ; remained employed, mentored, volunteered, and stayed out of trouble the parole board had no valid reason to deny my parole. In 2023 I won a post conviction appeal of the parole boards action. Superior court judge Christina Rankin found in her ruling the parole board abused thier discretion and ordered them to see me again. Unfortunately even after being seen again the board ignored the judges order and chose to deny me again. Thier only explanation being "early release would diminish the seriousness of the crime". If you would like more info about my situation please contact my attorney public deffender Doug Merrit 907-334-2180.

The passage of SB 176 would better equipt the parole board to serve the community.

Thank you for your time.

Ariel Patrick

James S. Stoneking #137139
Wildwood Correctional Complex
10 Chugach Ave
Kenai Alaska 99611

2-26-2024

Senator Loki Tobin
State Capitol Room 11
Juneau Alaska 99801

RF: SB 176, 2023

Senator Tobin,

My name is James S. Stoneking and I'm an incarcerated constituent being housed at Wildwood Correctional Complex at Kenai. I wish to express my support for SB 176. Reforming of the board and who set on it is long overdue.

I have been housed at Wildwood Correctional Complex for over 10-years now and incarcerated for just over 37-years. I have completed all programs that were available to me to include getting my MA in 2019. My last write-up was in 2005. I served the first 1/3rd of my sentence on 2-15-2020. I went before the board in Nov. of 2019. The board denied me parole and told me to do ten (10) more years. They used non-statutory criteria for their denial: "they felt I had not done enough time and it would be too harsh on the victims" these two criteria are not in statute. I am currently appealing their decision in the COA A-13993. Oral argument scheduled for 4/23/24.

The board of parole needs to have some check and balance system, which is currently not there. The SB 176 changes are good and more can be added to the bill if you feel it would not derail the bill. Let me suggest the following:

Granting of discretionary parole.

- (a) The board (will) may authorize the release of a prisoner who is otherwise eligible under AS 12.55.115 and AS 33.16.090(a)(1) on discretionary parole if it determines a reasonable probability exists that
- (1) the prisoner will live and remain at liberty without violating any laws or conditions imposed by the board;
 - (2) the prisoner's rehabilitation and reintegration into society will be furthered by release on parole;
 - (3) the prisoner will not pose a threat of harm to the public if released on parole; and
 - (4) ~~release of the prisoner on parole would not diminish the seriousness of the crime.~~ (4) is repealed and reinstated to read as
- (4) the prisoner who has met requirements (1)(2) and (3) shall be granted parole upon verification of a valid release plan by the institutional and field parole officer's.

Please insert some applicability to Sec. 6 as it is currently written. Something like. " Sec. 6. applies to all parole board hearings that have been held before, on or after the passing of this bill. If AS 33.16.085(a)(2)(C), 33.16.100(a)(4), or 33.16.100(g)(4) were used as a reason for denial and the offender met all other requirements offender shall be granted parole upon verification of an approved release plan."

Once again thank you for all that you are proposing.



February 28, 2024

Senator Loki Tobin

I am Raymond W. Schuenemann, a supporter of SB 176 to reform the Alaska Board of Parole.

As a state prisoner I am daily punished ever since August 26, 1987. That is 37 calendar years, so far, for over half of my life since I am 75-years-old. Over 30 years ago, June 1992, I graduated from the State's sex offender school in Fairbanks after 37 months of intensive education and therapy. My conduct and character record is exemplary.

Long before that I was a U.S. Marine Corps infantry Sergeant in Vietnam, a combat veteran, decorated, wounded, awarded the Purple Heart. Veterans Administration Doctors gave two independent examinations and diagnoses of OCD, the major mental illness, Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder, plus PTSD, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. Two more diagnoses confirming OCD and PTSD came later from Dr. Judith Becker, a past President of the American Psychological Association, and from Dr. John Woods, past Director of Utah State Mental Hospitals.

My sentencing Judge never knew about those four Psychiatrist Reports diagnosing treatable major mental illness, nor that I successfully graduated from Alaska's sex offender school after three years of education and therapy by medical professionals for my correctable and manageable mental health handicaps.

In 2013 I saw the Parole Board. They asked if I would retake the sex offender school? I said, "Yes." They gave me a 10-year sentence extension. Three months later the Board wrote saying that I don't need to take the school again. Why am I kept in prison for daily punishment?

May 8, 2023 I saw the Parole Board the second time. They gave me another 10-year sentence extension claiming that I now "don't, "understand the seriousness of the offense."

Alaska Parole Board members need to learn about ① sex offender diagnosis and treatment; ② human behavior; and ③ repentance - ex-offenders demonstrated law abiding character and behavior during decades of prison supervision.

You can hear for yourself why the Board of Parole needs reform by listening to the 20 minute recording of my May 8 parole hearing and hear how they act in the name of our State government.

Sincerely,

Raymond W. Schuenemann 153465
Wildwood Correctional Center
10 Chugach Ave.
Kenai, AK 99611

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE TOBIN,

MY NAME IS PHILIP WILSON, AND I AM A CONSTITUENT FROM BIRDWOOD. I AM WRITING TO YOU TO EXPRESS MY SUPPORT FOR SB 176, TO REFORM THE ALASKA BOARD OF PAROLE.

I HAVE BEEN INCARCERATED FOR THE LAST THIRTY YEARS. DURING MY TIME I HAVE WITNESSED YEARS OF INCONSISTENCIES AND DECISIONS THAT CONFUSE LOGIC, BY THE ALASKA PAROLE BOARD. I HAVE WITNESSED CANDIDATES WHO HAVE TURNED THEIR LIVES AROUND, GONE YEARS WITH NO BEHAVIORAL ISSUES, COMPLETED EVERY REHABILITATION PROGRAM AVAILABLE, HAD SOLID RELEASE PLANS WITH STRONG COMMUNITY SUPPORT AS WELL AS FULL SUPPORT OF DOC STAFF, PROBATION OFFICERS, AND ADMINISTRATION BE DENIED. AND INDIVIDUALS WHO HAVE HAD ABYSMAL INSTITUTIONAL RECORDS AND WERE CURRENT DRUG USERS GRANTED PAROLE. I HAVE WITNESSED FIRST HAND THE NEGATIVE EFFECT THIS HAS HAD ON THE ALASKA PRISON POPULATION / ENVIRONMENT.

I BELIEVE THE PAROLE BOARD SHOULD BE REFORMED TO PROVIDE A WELL-ROUNDED SET OF BACKGROUNDS TO JUDGE IF INCARCERATED PEOPLE ARE FIT TO LIVE WITHOUT POSING A THREAT TO THE COMMUNITY. THE BOARD OF PAROLE SHOULD OPERATE WITH THE SAME LEVEL OF TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY AS OTHER BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS IN ALASKA. THE CURRENT PAROLE BOARD SYSTEM IS FAILING TO MEET THE STANDARDS OF REQUIREMENTS NECESSARY TO FURTHER THE REHABILITATION OF INCARCERATED INDIVIDUALS.

I DO NOT ENVY THE PAROLE BOARD'S JOB, IT IS A GREAT RESPONSIBILITY. I DO BELIEVE THAT WE CAN AND NEED TO DO BETTER. ONE WAY TO ACCOMPLISH THIS IS WITH SB 176.

PLEASE SUPPORT SB 176 TO MAKE ALASKA'S CRIMINAL LEGAL SYSTEM MORE FAIR AND JUST.

Sincerely
Philip Wilson,

2-28-24

Dear Representative Tobin

My name is Tony Billak, and I am a resident at Wildwood Correctional Center. I have been housed here for the last two years but also have been housed at GILL and SCCC. I am writing to you to express my utmost support for SB176, to reform the Alaska Board of Parole.

I have been incarcerated for the last 10 years and have completed every education and mental health class available. Even though I am roughly halfway through my sentence and not eligible for the board for several more years, I have seen significant issues with people that are doing the right thing and have strong support from their probation officer and from the community being denied with no explanation from the parole board. It almost seems that particular people with certain crimes are being discriminated against and are not being given a fair shot at re-entry. I fully understand that some instances denying someone is warranted but I do believe that with a reformed board they will be able to better judge who poses a threat to the community.

I believe the change to the parole board is due and by putting a more diverse group of people in the seats will be able to more accurately judge

a persons character not just the crime, and this determination should weigh heavily on the chances of successful re-entry.

Please support SB176 to make Alaska's criminal legal system fair and just

Thankyou for your time

Tommy Ballou