

This is in regard to Joe Hunt, D-61863, Governor's Commutation Application

Reverend Kevin Ananta McSweeney

1 [REDACTED] 9

July 27, 2020

To: Governor Gavin Newsom

CC: CC1 Maldonado, CDCR

My name is Ananta McSweeney, and I am writing in regard to Joe Hunt, D-61863, Governor's Commutation Application.

I have been Joe Hunt's minister for over 30 years, visiting him in Folsom Prison, Pleasant Valley in Coalinga, and currently in Stockton at the Medical Facility Prison.

Mr Hunt has served his sentence and made numerous legal attempts to get an examination of the facts of his case. Because of his religious beliefs, he has refrained from anger towards the judicial system. He has spent his 30 plus years in prison in California sharing legal help with other prisoners, teaching stress reduction and meditation techniques, supporting peaceful communication between prisoners and prison staff and management. His attitude toward the circumstances of his incarceration I find remarkable. They embody the highest ideals of our religious teachings. They have been non violent, and forgiving toward all involved in his incarceration.

As Mr Hunt's confidential religious counselor, he would be obliged to privately share with me the facts of Mr Ron Levin's disappearance. If Mr Hunt had any involvement in a murder, he would be required by the tenets of our faith to ask for forgiveness, but Mr Hunt has been consistent for the last 35 years in sharing with me that he had no involvement nor knowledge of Mr Levin's disappearance. I could not, in good conscience, represent him as innocent if I had any doubt that he was entirely innocent.

As Governor, you have a unique opportunity to right the wrong that the California Justice system has dealt to Mr Joe Hunt. I can guarantee that the release of Joe Hunt will be a benefit to the people of California as he poses no threat, nor has he ever posed any threat to their safety. He will continue, outside prison to share non violence, and brotherhood among all the people of our state. Naturally, our Church community will welcome him and support his transition to non incarceration. I urge you to consider Mr Hunt's case in light of your statement questioning whether the State of California can be confident that all our convictions in death penalty cases have been fairly awarded. Would not the same standard apply in cases where the life without possibility of parole penalty has been assigned? In Mr Hunt's case, it was assigned 35 years ago, and Mr Hunt has never had an infraction before his arrest nor in 35 years in State Prison. I urge you to commute the sentence of Joe Hunt.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]
Reverend Kevin Ananta McSweeney

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This is in regard to Joe Hunt, D-61863, Governor's Commutation Application.

John and Phyllis Novak
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

8/4/2020

To: Governor Gavin Newsom
Cc: CC1 Maldonado, CDCR

Let us first introduce ourselves. We are the Spiritual Directors of Ananda Sangha, a worldwide movement based on meditation and simple, balanced living. Ananda was founded in 1968 by Swami Kriyananda (J. Donald Walters), with whom we worked closely from Ananda's earliest days. In time he designated us as his successors, in which capacity we have been serving since his passing in 2013.

Ananda has expanded over the years to include half a dozen flourishing communities along the U.S. West Coast and in Assisi, Italy, and grown into a church with tens of thousands of members throughout the world. Though the two of us remain based in our original community near Nevada City, California, our work often gives us the opportunity to lecture and teach around the world. You can find more information about Ananda through our website: ananda.org.

We are also authors of several books on meditation and related topics and write a weekly blog, offering spiritual advice, which reaches over 25,000 throughout the world. Our work is an ecumenical one: We teach the unity underlying the outward diversity of religions. Our particular focus is on the teachings of Paramhansa Yogananda, author of the widely respected book, *Autobiography of a Yogi*.

We first met Joe Hunt thirty-one years ago. He had written to our church, asking about what we offered. And so began our long friendship during which we introduced him to the practices of yoga and meditation. Since then we have visited him numerous times in various prisons: first at Folsom, later in Pleasant Valley, and most recently now in Stockton.

Joe has had a big impact on our lives, and in the way that makes the most difference—by his example. Our members aim high in life. It's one thing to study and appreciate the teachings of great men and women, and quite another to determine to live them oneself. It takes courage to dare the heights, and one of the chief advantages of living in spiritual community is the opportunity to draw hope, strength, and inspiration from those around us. This more than anything else explains why we've long looked upon Joe as a close member of our community. Here are just a few examples, out of many we could cite, of what we mean.



One of our precepts is that one's spirituality is proved in how we handle our life's challenges. All of us here promise, for example, to meditate regularly each day, morning and evening. It's not always easy to do if, say, a mood assails us, or our energy is low, or simply on account of the press of other responsibilities in our busy lives. Such challenges pale in comparison to those that Joe has faced—the noise and lack of privacy just two among many—and yet he has kept his vow faithfully. As a result we've seen him grow markedly over the years in his spiritual depth, and many years ago in Folsom Prison we initiated him in our highest technique of meditation.

Or take another precept we honor here: "There are no such things as obstacles, only opportunities." Joe gave us a demonstration of that when he was instrumental in raising—from behind prison bars!—a million-dollar contribution to a new temple here on which we finished construction last year, which coincided with Ananda's fiftieth anniversary.

We'll mention one last of our precepts: that the things that happen to us don't matter; it's what we become through them that does. To know Joe is to know the truth of that statement. With all he has been through, what stands out, above all the admirable things he has done, is who he has *become*. He is today, simply put, a shining light.

Each of Joe's victories has been deeply personal, and at the same time more than personal. Both of us have drawn a great deal of inspiration from his example, and have seen from our vantage point that our members worldwide have done the same. Whenever tempted to slide into bad habits regarding meditation, we think of Joe and our resolution stiffens.

We have shared an occasional story about Joe in our weekly blog and, consequently, his example has inspired thousands of people around the world, many of whom have written us about him. Ananda's founder once, when asked what the main qualification was to be made an Ananda minister, replied, "In times of personal difficulty, still to think first of others." Throughout his years in prison, Joe has always been a support to others, in many different ways.

We entreat you, Governor Newsom, to approve Joe's release from prison. Like most Americans, we believe that mercy is due to those who have done the hard work that true repentance entails, as regards both restitution and self-transformation. These we believe that Joe has by now demonstrated in great measure, both in deeds and in all sincerity.

Joe has done so much in all his years in prison to give back to others and to better himself. Now that he's so firmly established in this direction, how very much more effectively yet he could continue to grow and serve others were he to have his freedom.

It would, indeed, be a great shame if the broader society were to continue to be denied the benefit of the contributions Joe could make. Everyone, it is true, has something of



value to offer to the world. And yet it must be added that some people are particularly blessed in what they can give to others. In our leadership role at Ananda, we have needed to learn to recognize such individuals. Joe, quite simply, is one of them.

We have invited Joe to live at Ananda Village should he be freed. We've told him that we—that the whole community—would welcome him warmly. And that we'd be only too happy to offer him a comfortable living situation in a beautiful rural setting as well as employment. There are many roles that he could fill here in such areas as financial advising or sharing the teachings we follow.

It no longer serves as a benefit to society to force this fine man to remain incarcerated, especially during this dangerous time of the Covid-19 virus. This is more urgently important now, since Joe is beginning to have his own health challenges after thirty-six years in prison. He deserves to have a life of freedom in the time remaining to him.

Thank you for your kind consideration of our thoughts. If you wish to follow up with us in any way, you're most welcome to. You can reach us at [REDACTED], or [REDACTED], or by phone at [REDACTED].

Sincerely yours,

[REDACTED]

John and Phyllis Novak (Nayaswamis Jyotish and Devi)
Spiritual Directors, Ananda Sangha Worldwide



*This letter was transcribed by Ana Kirsch on behalf of James Van Cleave III. The original handwritten letter is attached here as well.

This is in regard to Joe Hunt, D-61863, Governor's Commutation Application

To: Governor Gavin Newsom

Cc: CC1 Maldonado, CDCR

Dear Sir,

My name is James Van Cleave III. I am a retired college teacher of English. Since 1974 I have served in a cooperative spiritual community names Ananda Village. My work has included teaching English as well as yoga and meditation, leading programs for guests, and landscaping and forest maintenance. Our service is based on two principles: people are more important than things; and, true spiritual victory comes only through right attitude and action: kindness, compassion, friendship, humility, generosity.

I've corresponded with Joe Hunt several times, and know him also from his interactions with many fellow residents of our community. In every case Joe - whom we know by his spiritual name, Jiamam ("victory to the Divine") - has inspired his correspondent. He has demonstrated the qualities of a true man of God, the very qualities our community looks for and seeks to foster in those wishing to live at Ananda Village or one of our branch communities in America, Europe, or India.

Joe's example especially impresses us because he maintains a strong spiritual focus under the challenging circumstances of thirty-six years of incarceration. Further, he has turned his incarceration into an opportunity to serve his fellow inmates - through counseling, help with appeals, and with universal friendship. In addition, he has managed to serve his larger spiritual family outside prison by his example, his uplifting communications, and, amazingly enough, by using his understanding of the financial world to raise over a million dollars to help Ananda Village build a temple dedicated to all religions.

Recently a number of Joe's friends here in the village have been working together to clear a forested hilltop as the building site for a home for Joe's sister and brother-in-law and, we devoutly hope, for Joe too, should he in fact receive a commutation. The whole community would rejoice to have this noble man as a neighbor.

I would welcome any questions should anyone wish to speak with me.

Sincerely,
James Van Cleave III



This is regard to Joe Hunt - D-61863, Governor's Commutation
Application

To Governor Gavin Newsom
cc: CCI Maldonado, CDCR

Dear Sirs:

My name is James Wallace CanCleave III. I am a retired college teacher of English. Since 1974 I have served in a cooperative spiritual community named Ananda Village. My work has included teaching English as well as yoga and meditation, leading programs for guests, and landscaping and forest maintenance. Our service is based on two principles: people are more important than things; and, true spiritual victory comes only through right attitude and action: Kindness, compassion, friendship, humility, generosity.

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I would welcome any questions should anyone wish to speak with me.

Sincerely,

[Redacted Signature]

This is in regard to Joe Hunt, D-61863, Governor's Commutation Application.

August 20, 2020

To: Governor Gavin Newsom

Cc: CC1 Maldonado, CDCR

Dear Sirs,

My name is Anna Preston and I live and work just outside of Nevada City, California. I am writing to ask that you consider commuting the sentence of Joe Hunt.

Although I have never met Joe Hunt in person, many people I deeply respect speak very highly of his character.

We learn a lot about a person's character through how they face challenges. Since receiving a life sentence without the possibility of parole 35 years ago at the age of 24, Joe Hunt has focused his energy towards helping others. A few examples include co-founding the first men's support group in a California prison, the counseling he has offered other prisoners seeking sentence reductions, and his support for building a temple of all religions. Joe is also sincere in his spiritual life and practices meditation daily.

It is Joe's consistent acts of generosity and kindness as well as his decades long dedication to his spiritual practices that lead me to believe he has learned all he had to learn from his time in prison.

I hope you will consider commuting Joe Hunt's sentence and allow him to go before a parole board. During his 35 years in custody, he has shown himself to be capable of both learning from past mistakes and contributing positively to society.

Joe has the support he needs from his family, church and friends to transition successfully into life outside of prison. If he is released, I am confident that Joe will be an asset to his community.

Thank you for taking the time to read my letter in support of Joe Hunt. I am happy to answer any questions or concerns you may have. You can reach me at () or

Sincerely,

Anna Preston



This is in regard to Joe Hunt, D-61863, Governor's Commutation Application

August 19, 2020

To: Governor Gavin Newsom
CC: CC1 Maldonado, CDCR

Dear Sirs,

My name is Arya Cheng. I am a recent college graduate and member of Ananda Church of Self-Realization. Ananda is a worldwide spiritual movement based on teachings of yoga and meditation. At Ananda, we strive to help each other live to our highest potential by living simply in adherence to high ideals.

I learned about Joe Hunt in 2018, during Ananda's efforts to fundraise for our Temple of Light, when it was revealed that Joe Hunt and his family donated 1 million dollars for the cause. Every time I go to meditate in the temple, I feel profound gratitude for Joe Hunt's efforts for helping manifest this beautiful sacred place for us.

Although I have never met Joe Hunt, I consider him one of my role models. Through the testimonials of his family and trusted friends and mentors, I learned about how Joe Hunt co-founded the first men's group in New Folsom prison and how he offered legal assistance to help reduce the sentences of various inmates. I am in awe of Joe Hunt's ability to help others despite the difficulty and limitations imposed on him by being in prison. Joe Hunt's actions show that he decides to give when everything (even his freedom) is taken from him, to love in the face of hate, to be kind when surrounded by violence and injustice.

Thus most of all, I am inspired by Joe Hunt's extraordinary character of one devoted to truth, justice and kindness that know no bounds. It is rare to see someone who not only seizes the chance to help others, but also puts the happiness and wellbeing of others before his own.

I do not believe that Joe Hunt is guilty. But if he is, his generous and positive actions have demonstrated his efforts to change and his dedication to uplifting humanity. I believe in forgiveness and second chances. How can one grow and change when they are not offered the opportunity to atone for their wrongs? Joe Hunt has helped so many people behind bars and I am convinced he will help many more if he were to be free.

If Joe Hunt were to be released, I along with other members in our Ananda spiritual family will welcome him and support him in his transition.

Thank you for reading my letter. Should you have any questions and concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me at aryacheng@ananda.org.

Sincerely,

Arya Cheng



August 4, 2020

Re: Joe Hunt, D-61863, Governor's Commutation Application

To: Governor Gavin Newsom

Cc: CC1 Maldonado, CDCR

Re: Commutation of Prison Sentence for Joseph Hunt D61863

Dear Governor Newsom:

When I was 22, in 1969, I met an American spiritual teacher, James Donald Walters, better known as Swami Kriyananda. He was a direct disciple of the Indian master, Paramhansa Yogananda, author of *Autobiography of a Yogi*.

I began meditating and soon after moved to the spiritual community of Ananda founded by Kriyananda. Ananda has been my home, job, and spiritual life ever since. I am a founding member of two communities – the original in Nevada City, California and then Palo Alto, where, since 1987, I have served as a spiritual director. I have published four books, and also travel and lecture around the world on the teachings of Self-Realization.

My website is [REDACTED] links to my youtube channel, [REDACTED], which has 8.45K subscribers, and includes over 1000 videos of classes I've given.

I first met Joe Hunt in 1988. On a list of books that his mother could send to him in prison was *Autobiography of a Yogi*. The author describes a powerful, life-changing meditation technique called Kriya. Joe was incarcerated at that time in the San Mateo County jail, quite near Ananda's Palo Alto temple. He telephoned Ananda, hoping someone could come to the jail and teach him Kriya.

My co-director, David Praver and I went to the jail to see him. That was the beginning of a friendship that has continued to the present day.

At the beginning, we did not know – or care – whether Joe Hunt was guilty, innocent, or had good or bad character. He was a soul in trouble, had appealed for help, and it was our God-given responsibility to help him in any way we could.

Kriya meditation would not only ease the stress of prison life, it also had the potential to reform his character insofar as that may have been needed. Kriya practice can make a bad man into a good one, and a good man into an ideal person.

In the three decades since that first meeting, I have visited Joe often, exchanged countless letters with him, and spent many hours talking to him on the phone. Through me, he soon met many people from Ananda, who have also become his friends and supporters. Through Joe, his sister and brother-in-law became active in Ananda, and for many years attended Ananda Palo Alto where I am the minister.

Soon after our meeting in 1988, Joe faced a second trial in San Mateo, where he was judged not guilty. I was in the courtroom for most of that trial. In the course of it, Joe also presented evidence from the first trial, in which he had been judged guilty and for which he is still incarcerated. Joe also shared with me the primary legal papers from those trials, and all that he has filed since.

From my experience in the courtroom, and a careful study of these documents, over many years, I am convinced that Joe Hunt was wrongfully convicted in the first place and has been inappropriately imprisoned all these years. Justice would be served by releasing him now so that he can live out his remaining years in freedom.

Still, quite aside from the question of guilt or innocence, the Joe Hunt who would be released now is a totally transformed man from the one who entered prison all those years ago.

Prison life is far from easy. The opportunities to violate a high moral code are ubiquitous. When he entered prison, Joe freely admits he did not have a clear moral compass. Kriya has changed that. I have been profoundly impressed by Joe's ability to hold to his principles – no matter what. Regular practice of meditation is difficult for those who have complete control over their environment. Joe has no control

whatsoever. Conditions for meditation could not be less congenial – crowded, deafening noise, competing televisions, no privacy.

Yet, from the time of his first contact with Ananda, through several initiations carried out despite prison conditions, either in person or on the phone, he has *never* failed in his commitment to twice daily practice of Kriya meditation, plus additional daily practices. He has carried out a serious study of countless spiritual books, which I and others from Ananda have provided for him, and discussed with him during our many visits and phone calls.

There are few people in any circumstance that have such an exemplary record of spiritual living. The testimony of those who have shared his prison life – both staff and fellow inmates – testify to his remarkable character. That Joe has accomplished all he has spiritually speaks volumes about his integrity and his commitment to right living.

His situation could easily have made him angry and bitter. His response has been just the opposite, courageously making the best of the circumstances in which he finds himself, trusting to a Higher Power that all is in order for his ultimate well-being.

In my very active life I have met 1000s of people from many countries. I have rarely met a soul so dedicated to self-improvement, and so loyal to his spiritual practice as Joe Hunt has been from our first meeting until this day.

Ananda is a worldwide organization with perhaps 50,000 active members; a total of 1000 living full time in nine spiritual communities in the U.S.A., Europe, and India. Even though we are large and dispersed, because of the ease of global communication, Joe is known to virtually all of those members. They have prayed for him, received with gratitude his many communications, and the fruits of his creative work. Even from prison, he has helped raised nearly a million dollars which he dedicated to the building of a temple at the main Ananda community.

Joe will find friends and supporters, and a home in any one of those communities. Given what we know of his character, tried and proven over these many years, I am *certain* he will be an upstanding, contributing member of Ananda, and,

through Ananda, serve as an inspiration, and perhaps, in time, even a guiding light to countless others.

He has spent virtually all his adult life in prison. Insofar as rehabilitation was ever necessary, he has gone farther toward remaking his life in an image of righteousness than most men could ever claim, in or out of prison.

If anyone deserves a chance at "life outside," it is Joe Hunt. I plead with you to commute his sentence and give him that opportunity.

If personal testimony is needed, please allow me the privilege of speaking on his behalf.

Sincerely,

[Redacted signature]

Asha Nayaswami

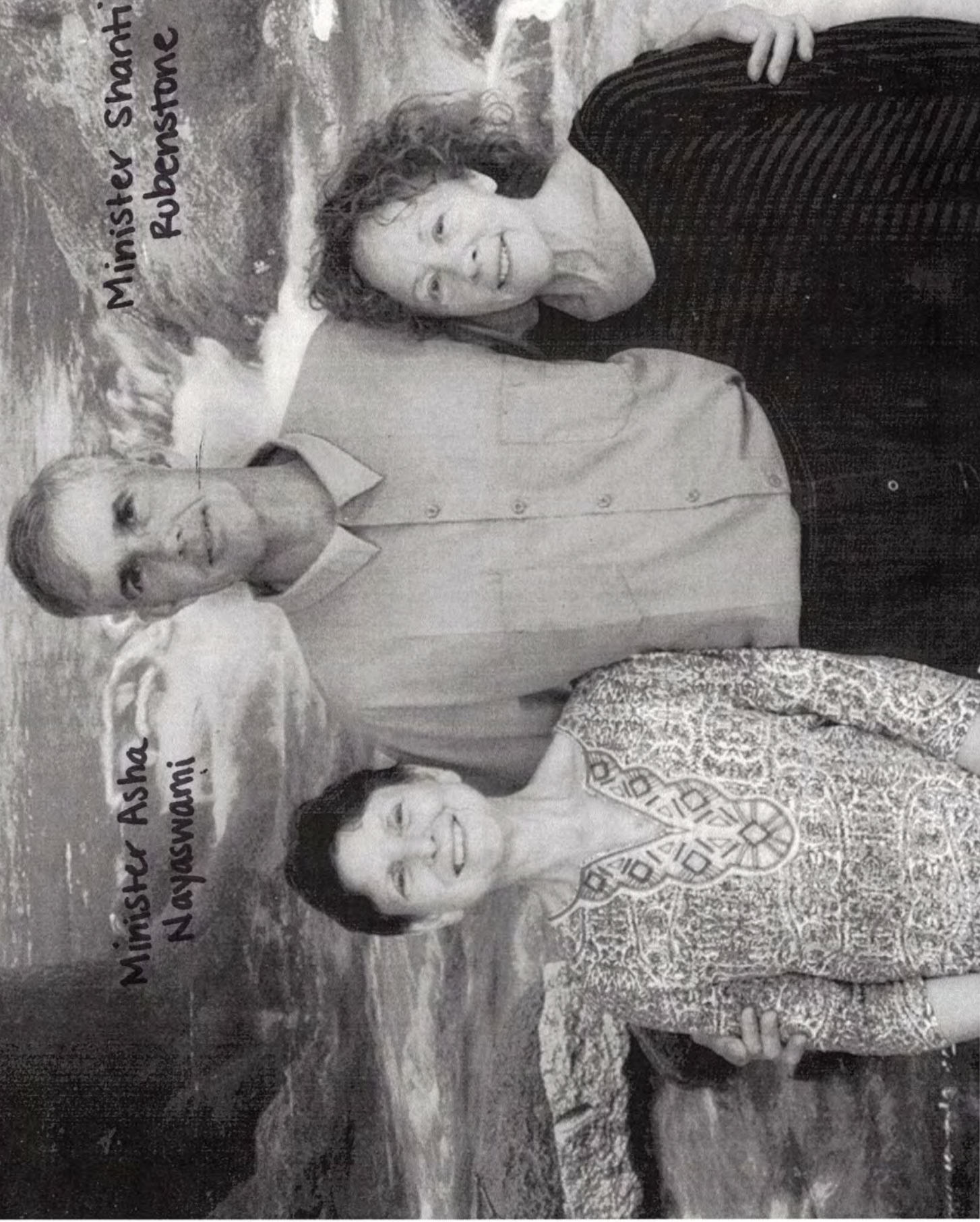
[Redacted address]



Joe Hunt (Jairam)

Minister Shanti
Rubenstone

Minister Asha
Nayaswami



This is in regard to Joe Hunt, D-61863, Governor's Commutation Application.

August 21, 2020

To: Governor Gavin Newsom Cc: CC1 Maldonado, CDCR

My name is Benjamin Ahlvik-Garrison. I am an internship coordinator for Ananda Village based in Nevada City California. I am newlywed, my wife and I enjoy the simple joys and satisfaction of living in a cooperative spiritual community. We have lived here for over a year and feel very fulfilled by the connections with our friends and neighbors and are happy to be contributing to the future of the community. I am writing to express my strong belief in reforming the prison system by offering second chances for inmates who have life in prison sentences, especially when the individual in question has shown a commitment to reform and willingness to offer positive contribution to his/her community and society.

In the case of Joe Hunt there is injustice in his sentence as he was wrongly imprisoned for murder without evidence. The case for his release is piled in his favor due to his respected status among inmates, guards and all personnel in the prison facility. Out in the world he has a large community who all stand behind his innocence and release. His commitment to our spiritual community, his connection with friends and family and his continued support of the spiritual work has proved his selfless loyalty. He has a lot to offer the world and has wasted enough years behind bars already.

Won't you please give him a chance to be considered for release by the parole board?

Thank you for your attention to this letter and all the others in favor of Joe Hunt's release. I can be reached at [REDACTED] if you need to contact me for any reason.

Sincerely,

Benjamin Ahlvik-Garrison

Benjamin Ahlvik-Garrison



Valfabbrica, Italy - August 6, 2020

In regard to Joe Hunt's, D-61863, and Governor's Commutation Application.

Dear Governor Gavin Newsom cc: CC1 Maldonado, CDCR

My name is Catia Catellani I am from Modena Italy. I have always loved and respected the United States of America, I believe very much in the principles that have made them "great" that is: freedom, opportunity & sense of responsibility. Today Joe Hunt plee touches my sense of "justice", to allow someone that has shown a willingness to redeem and repent from past mistakes, to be useful again in society and maybe do good, is so beautiful.

I was very impressed by his story, I see a person who has done a great job of personal development and by this becoming a man worthy of being part of the free society and worthy of making a his contribution to this very complicated age. I believe that cases like this, if they are successful, give people a little more hope in the future, for a more "just", more supportive, where good triumphs over "evil", where a person can have a new opportunity to start living again.

Thank you for your attention and best wishes to you

Best regards

([REDACTED])

[REDACTED]

Dear Sir,

My name is Captain Anil Kumar Gupta (Retd). I recently took pre mature retirement from Indian Defence Force (Indian Navy). I am based in Delhi, India and a member of Ananda Sangha. I got connected to Ananda Sangha to help bring immense personal transformation in people. I am going through there courses and there is so much to learn. I am moving ahead with Motto RYTHM (Raise Yourself to help Mankind). Ananda Sangha has given me the correct perspective of life to live this life peacefully, lovingly and joyfully and to motivate others to do the same.

I don't know Joe Hunt personally but from all that I have read and heard from my own spiritual mentors at Ananda Sangha, I am deeply inspired by him. I know he is an inspiration to many, from the cell of his prison he has done so much good and shared so much light with whoever he came in contact with. I believe this soul needs our compassion and not judgement. I have erred and so have every single person I know. But I do know that if someone can help others while going through their own storm, it really calls for great spirit and courage and reflects on his good soul qualities.

What Joe Hunt did knowingly or unknowingly when he was 24 years old is no longer relevant. He has already suffered much. Today he is 60 and suffering from heart and health problems. His term in prison has been exemplary. I know without doubt, that he will only be a person of service to mankind and society if he is given a chance to rebuild his life from here.

You have the power and the grace to grant him mercy. I humbly appeal to you to release Joe Hunt and give compassion and humanity a chance! God knows he deserves it.

If I can be of any service to you or if you have any concerns regarding my letter, please feel free to reach me at joygupzz@gmail.com or call me at [REDACTED].

Kind Regards,

[REDACTED]

Captain Anil Kumar Gupta (Veteran)

Indian Navy

[REDACTED]



This is in regard to Joe Hunt, D-61863, Governor's Commutation Application.

August 20, 2020

To: Governor Gavin Newsom Cc: CC1 Maldonado, CDCR

My name is Christian Salisbury. I am a stringed instrument builder and a small business owner based in Nevada City CA. My wife and I live in Ananda Village, a rural, intentional spiritual community based from the teachings of Paramhansa Yogananda. His teachings are based in the deep meditative traditions of India dating back untold years. We seek to find our own unity in Spirit, to be Love, Joy, Kindness and share it with all.

I first heard of Joe Hunt from my friend, spiritual teacher and minister, Ananta McSweeney. Ananta and His wife Maria have visited Joe on several occasions and in several prisons. They are his friends, spiritual teachers (two of several) and spiritual cohorts. Ananta has told me, and many others of Joe's predicament. It seems to me an obvious mistake on the justice system to have convicted a man for murder when there is no body and no murder weapon. And 35 years in prison with a conviction based off such lame evidence is a travesty.

In all of his years in prison Joe as seeked to help those in need. He has help people out of prison and taught those who wanted to learn it, meditation. He has also raised much money for the building of the beautiful Temple Of Light here and Ananda Village. He seeks to serve others, to help others, to raise money for good works. This is why he should be released from prison. Because he is a changed man for the better.

Wont you please give him a chance to be considered for release by the parole board?

Thank you for your time and consideration.
Christian Salisbury

(
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Feel free to contact me any time if you would like to contact me for any reason.

This is in regard to Joe Hunt, D-61863, Governor's Commutation Application.

Governor Gavin Newsom
cc: CC1 Maldonado, CDCR

August 21st 2020

I am an honest, educated, law abiding citizen with a stable home life, a true sense of right and wrong, and a deep faith in God. I am writing to ask you to commute Joe Hunt's sentence, to allow a parole board to consider him for release from prison.

I became aware of Joe Hunt's case three years ago via the Spiritual Directors of my church, The Ananda Church of Self Realization. I have been involved with Ananda for six years, and I have observed the leaders and long-time members to be good and decent people with sound judgment.

I learnt about Mr Hunt's efforts to raise funds for Ananda's Temple of Light campaign, to help fund a much needed new place of worship. I was so inspired by the good work he was doing for his community while inside prison. **This is a man with good intentions.** His personal outlook and motivations are quite different at the age of 60 than the 24 year old he is judged as.

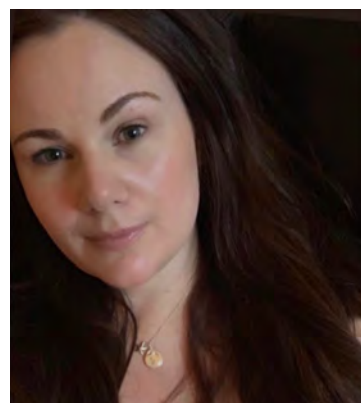
I implore you to consider the very low risk that Mr Hunt poses to the general public if released. I have not heard nor read of any accounts of Joe Hunt being violent towards any other people. Joe Hunt's behaviour in the 1980's was an indication of the times and of his youth. **Mr Hunt is now an elderly inmate who is unnecessarily costing taxpayer money to be kept locked up.**

Mr Hunt has a proven record of excellent prisoner behaviour, service to his fellow inmates and to his Church. **He has served his time, it has gone on long enough.** I feel that releasing him on compassionate grounds would look favourably upon the Governorship and the State of California. The vast majority of people reading those newspaper headlines would say that 35 or so years is reasonable time served. People have moved on, but Joe hasn't been given that chance.

There is a meaningful life waiting for Joe Hunt when he is released from prison. He has a wife, a devoted sister and brother in law and the support of good friends to help him adjust back to normal life. Please allow him to experience physical freedom in his later years with his family and Church.

Sincerely,

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I
I
I



This is in regard to Joe Hunt, D-61863, Governor's Commutation Application.

August 24, 20

To: Governor Gavin Newsom

Cc: CC1 Maldonado, CDCR

Dear Sirs,

I have never met Jairam, but I received a call from Catherine and Michael Olivier earlier this year and they were very concerned about a heart condition Jairam had developed that was beyond the level of care he was getting in the prison system. I reached out to a cardiologist here at Stanford to enlist his aid in guiding Jairam to the proper specialists to attend to his condition. I hope that the issue is resolved or at least under control, but I do think that Jairam's physical health is an important factor in requesting his release at this time, not to mention the added risk that COVID-19 presents to people with pre-existing conditions.

Sincerely,

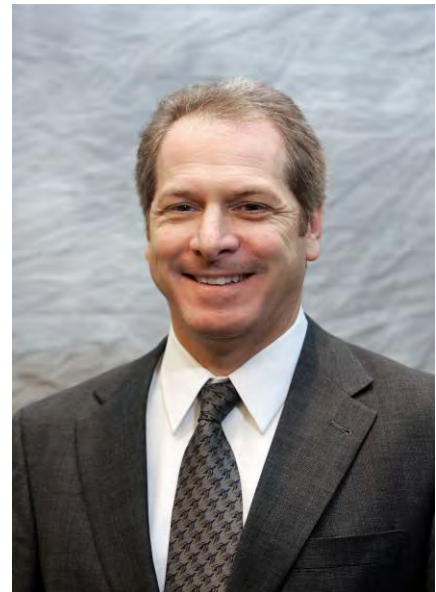
[Redacted Signature]

David M. Hovsepian, MD
Clinical Professor of Radiology
Stanford University School of Medicine

Associate Director of Radiology Quality and Safety
Department of Radiology

[Redacted Contact Information] 2

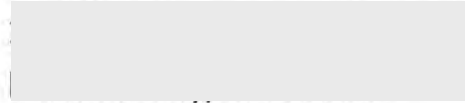
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**This is in regard to Joe Hunt, D-61863, Governor's Commutation
Application:**

Rodger Hall



August 20,2020

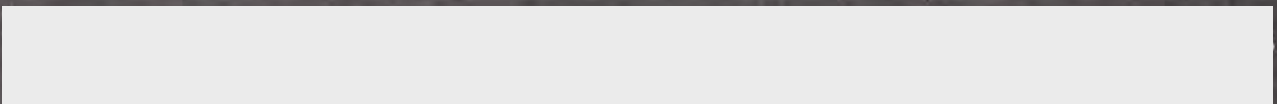
To: Governor Newsom

Cc:CC1 Maldonado, CDCR

Good Day, I am writing in regard to Joe Hunt, D-61863, Governor's Commutation Application.

My name is Rodger Hall. I was born and raised in California and have lived here most of my adult life. I was a manager in the retail sector for a few years before moving into the construction trades and since the mid-1990's I have been a California State Licensed Electrical Contractor. I am married and have one son in his early 30's.

I am writing on behalf of Joe Hunt as it is my understanding that in this particularly awkward time period that we find ourselves in as a state, country, and world which has been brought about by the Covid-19 Pandemic has also created an opportunity to re-think the timeline for release of some long-term prison inmates.



I am only acquainted with Joe because we belong to the same church group. I honestly do not have a personal relationship with Joe but I am aware that some of the elders in the church do. My particular relationship with Joe surrounds the new church building that Joe helped to bring into manifestation through his mind-blowing generosity and creativity.

There are not too many people on this planet that have done something like Joe did for this new church building. Through his insight and understanding of the world of finance and investment he was able to guide some family members into making an investment in Bitcoin (the current number 1 crypto currency in use). This investment created a windfall profit of 1 million dollars which Joe promptly donated to the new church construction fund. Joe easily could have taken that million dollars and had it set aside for himself in the hopes that he would get out someday. That surely would be what most people would do. I certainly would have thought of doing something like that. I do think of myself as being pretty expansive, giving, and selfless, but giving away a million dollars is something I could never even imagine in my wildest dreams.

The fact that Joe worked to create that money (investing / trading in the stock market can certainly be considered stressful work at times) and then gave it away freely says to me that not only is he the type of person who is worthy of release but in fact someone who will be a blessing and boon to the general world population in this time of great need. I know for sure that Joe will be welcomed with open arms into this Worldwide Church Community that we both belong.

If for any reason you would wish to contact me to clarify and of the above I can be reached through my business email of

[REDACTED] or my home phone ! [REDACTED]

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

Rodger Hall



This is in regard to Joe Hunt, D-61863, Governor's Commutation Application.

August 21, 2020

To: Governor Gavin Newsom Cc: CC1 Maldonado, CDCR

My name is Devendra Jaiswal. I have been a spiritual teacher for the last 15 years and am based in the city Pune, India.

Joe has already served 35 years in prison. I don't know personally but some of my friends who have visited him in prison speak very positive of him.

Please give him a chance to be considered for release by the parole board.

I can be reached at [REDACTED] if you need to contact me for any reason.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

Devendra Jaiswal



August 18, 2020

This is in regard to Joe Hunt, D-61863, Governor's Commutation Application

To: Governor Gavin Newsom

Cc: CC1 Maldonado, CDCR

Dear Governor Newsom,

I am writing to ask you to commute the sentence of Joe Hunt (D-61863), to allow a parole board to consider him for release from prison. I have had the privilege of getting to know Joe, both in person and through written correspondence over many years.

Based on the voluminous evidence I have read and learned from my personal contact with Joe, I am convinced that he should have been released many years ago. That he is still incarcerated is a continuing miscarriage of justice. Furthermore, he has shown—for many years now, that he is rehabilitated far beyond the level of anyone who qualifies for parole. Under the present circumstances due to COVID-19, his life is at risk where he is.

I firmly believe, for these reasons, that Joe is a very strong candidate for commutation. If he is released, he will have numerous choices of places to live and work from among the Ananda Communities and his network of literally hundreds of friends and supporters. Please give him the chance to be considered by the parole board.

Thank you for your kind attention to this matter. If you need to contact me for any reason, I am available as shown below.

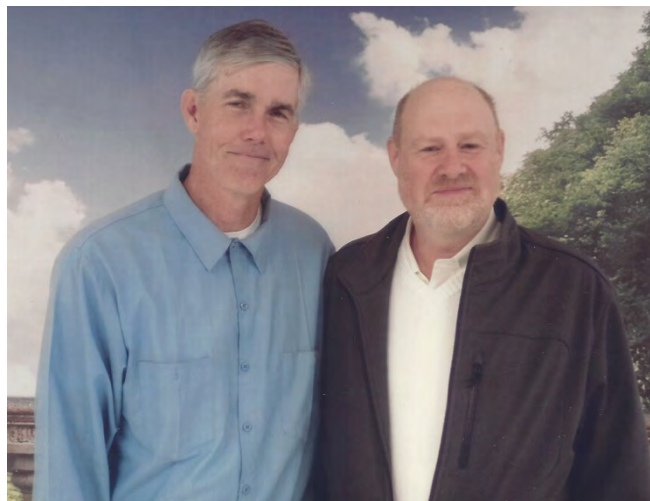
Thanking you again.

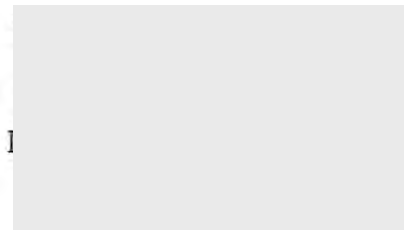
Sincerely,

[Redacted signature]

Peter Schuppe
Spiritual Director

[Redacted contact information]

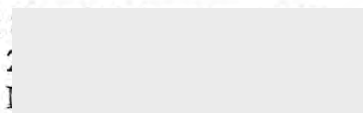




August 12, 2020

TO: Governor Gavin Newsom
Cc: CC1 Maldonado, CDCR

FROM:



RE: Joe Hunt, D-61863, Governor's commutation application
Current address: California Healthcare Facility, Stockton

Dear Governor Newsom,

My name is Shanti Rubenstone.

I am a Stanford trained physician and a minister, currently living and practicing in Palo Alto. Please know that I am a well-respected, professional woman, serving the Bay Area community in many ways and for many decades now.

I feel strongly about this case, and I would happily ride to Sacramento to talk to anyone about it.

I am writing to you about a dear friend of mine, Joe Hunt.
He is currently an inmate at the Ca Healthcare Facility in Stockton.
He is serving LWOP. He has been in prison for over 35 years ... all of his adult life.

Before I write about Joe I would like to introduce myself.

I am 72 years old and for most of my adult life I have had one of the largest internal medicine practices in the country. Mostly I have worked here in the Bay Area with a five-year hiatus in Baltimore. I practice medicine and I have taught at several universities over the years. I love working with people. I always have. I feel honored and privileged to do the work I do. I 'came in' with a deep intuitive understanding/knowing of what is happening for individuals. I am not psychic, not like that, just intuitive. I know when there is something amiss, and often I know what it is. I connect easily with people on all planes Physical, emotional, and spiritual. Hence my large practice. People feel seen, known, and cared for, and it is true. I do really see them, and I do really care.

I could say more, but mostly what I said above is what I feel is relevant.

I will only add that I am a minister and a co-spiritual director of the Ananda Church of Self Realization, a worldwide spiritual community dedicated to helping people transform their lives and *realize* their true potential.

I have known Joe for several years now. Long ago, early on in his 35 years in prison, he asked to be taught our form of meditation called Kriya Yoga. Since then he practices hours a day and has taught meditation to many others in the prison. I have met with him personally and counseled him many times in these past several years. He has shown a level of transformation, humility, sincerity and human goodness that is far above most people I know, even outside of prison. Please remember that my whole life has been dedicated to serving people who choose to be well.

He stands out. He is exemplary. Through his own spiritual goodness, he has helped transform his cellmate and many others in prison.

And so, an absolutely lovely, very bright, centered, calm, caring, innocent individual has spent his entire adult life behind bars. It is sad and wasteful beyond words. Yet he remains positive, hopeful, and at ease.

I would only like to add that over the years, and in many places WAY worse than where he is now, he has had no problems with prison staff or other inmates ... ever. He has never, even once, been in a physical altercation, which is a miracle in and of itself in these places

It speaks to someone's nature that they can live like that under the harshest of circumstances and be well liked and deeply respected by all, prisoners and prison employees alike.

Will you please consider looking into to his case?

This may sound presumptuous, but it is not: If you are willing to do this you will be glad you did.

It is always good to help good people in need and to help justice prevail.

This is one great soul.

Thank you for reading and listening.

Dr. Shanti Rubenstone

This is in regard to Joe Hunt, D-61863, Governor's Commutation Application

August 17, 2020

To: Governor Gavin Newson
Cc: CC1 Maldonado, CDCR

My name is Gloria Ramirez. I am writing in regard to Joe Hunt, D-61863, Governor's Commutation Application.

For the last 20 years I have dedicated my life as a life coach, helping others to transform their lives by overcoming self-destructive habits, attitudes and beliefs. I am forever grateful for the mentors and people in my own life that gave me a second chance when my life was not going in the right direction. They basically saved my life and changed my future forever. Now I have the great fortune to do the same for others and I witness the transformation in their lives. This is why I firmly believe in giving people the opportunity to rebuild their lives.

I moved to Ananda Village, a spiritual community in California, 5 years ago. We are a community focused on deepening our relationship with God through meditation, prayer, service and support of one another. Since I came to Ananda, I have consistently heard from the spiritual directors of Ananda and ministers who know him personally that Joe Hunt is a wonderful, very special human being. Based on all the positive things I have heard about him, I am eager and happy at the prospect of meeting Joe in person.

It touched my heart very deeply when it was announced here at Ananda Village, that Joe, his sister and brother in-law were going to donate more than one million dollars to help with the construction of our new temple. I wanted to give him a hug and let him know that his act of kindness said everything that needed to be said about his character. I have heard wonderful stories about his sense of love, compassion and service helping his fellow prison mates. All I have is gratitude in my heart for the service he is rendering while incarcerated and I believe he now deserves to be release and to integrate his life back into society.

I believe that all these years in prison with a clean record and good conduct is a proven testimonial that he will continue to be a positive influence to our society. He has a family here at Ananda Village who will receive him with open arms. **Also, personally, as a life coach, I am ready to offer him any support he might need as he reintegrates into society.** I trust that he will be given the opportunity that he well deserves, to be released from prison. I offer my full endorsement for Joe's commutation application.

Thank you for your time and attention to this letter. I am available at [REDACTED] in case you have any questions.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]



This is in regard to Joe Hunt, D-61863, Governors Commutation Application

To Governor Gavin Newsom

8/21/20

Cc: CC1 Maldonado, CDCR

I am a monastic living in the Ananda Village community in Nevada city, California, and I'd like to add my support for Joe Hunt's release from prison.

I personally have never met Joe Hunt, but a number of people in our Ananda spiritual family have, whom I consider to be exceptionally great people- devoting their lives for God with a pure heart. Among them are our worldwide spiritual leaders Jyotish and Devi Novak. I admire and revere these two people more than anyone else that I know. Pure hearted, humble, giving, loving, happy. They are true examples of living for God and living a simple and happy life. They know Joe Hunt and see the goodness in his heart and believe he belongs in this world with us. And that feeling is validated by all the other Ananda family members that meet him and get to know him. They all feel that Joe Hunt is a good man.

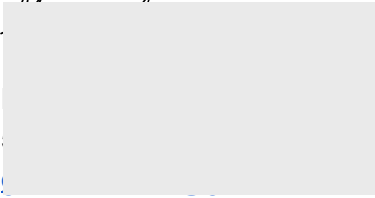
I personally believe that Joe Hunt is innocent, but hypothetically speaking, even if he wasn't; isn't it clear that he has a good heart? Life is a school. We grow and we learn through out turbulations and mistakes. Should one mistake define the rest of our life? For some people, an entire life time is not enough to learn a lesson, yet for others, it can be learned in an instant. I believe we should judge people based not on their mistakes in the past, but who they are in the present. Who we are is never set in stone. We are always changing, learning, and adapting to the world around us.

Even in prison, this man has been able to affect others and the world in a positive way. He helped donate over 1 million dollars to a temple of god, called the Temple of Light, situated here in Ananda Village. This is a beautiful temple where many come and feel inspired to live a life for God. Joe Hunt also has helped fellow prison inmates, with appeal letters and counseling. And it seems everyone who gets to know him likes and respects him.

I strongly believe that he deserves a chance in society; and he has a great big spiritual family of Ananda worldwide to help and support him. Its clear to me that he has a good heart. And with hundreds of people that want to support him, I think his integration back into society would be a very positive thing. As we all know, we are greatly affected by who we surround ourselves with, and this support for him would add an extra energy and reassurance for his starting a fresh, healthy new life.

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,
Shane Kenihan



This is in regard to Joe Hunt, D-61863, Governor's Commutation Application.

August 21, 2020

To: Governor Gavin Newsom

Cc: CC1 Maldonado, CDCR

My name is Steven J. Feldman. I am a professional musician and music instructor in Seattle, Washington. I teach at a community music school called Music Center of the Northwest. I also perform as a pianist in the music programs of The Center for Spiritual Living and Bet Alef Meditational Synagogue. I live in an intentional spiritual community and practice meditation on a daily basis.

I do not personally know Joe Hunt but I have known the people he has chosen to affiliate with in the Ananda Church of Self-Realization for many years. They are men and women of very high integrity, high spirit of service and high intelligence. They believe that Joe is a very good person who likely never committed the crime he was convicted of and, even though wrongly convicted, has been a model prisoner. I trust the judgment of these people. I also know that Joe chose, under the most difficult circumstances of being in prison, to align himself with the teachings and practices of this group. For me this indicates very high and noble strength of character.

It is important to me to feel that I live in a country where it is recognized that laws that are designed can be mis-applied, and where mistakes are made there is a way for justice and compassion to win out. I feel that it is important when viewing those who have suffered misfortune to remember "there but for the grace of God go I." Unfortunately, it is possible for anyone to be wrongly accused and wrongly imprisoned. It is very important to me to believe that those who are in a position to rectify such mistakes will do so.

Please give him a chance to be considered for release by the parole board.

Thank you for considering my request. I can be reached at [REDACTED] or [REDACTED] if you need to contact me.



Sincerely,

[REDACTED]
Steven Feldman

August 3, 2020

Governor Gavin Newsom
1303 10th Street, Suite 1173
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Joe Hunt – D61863, Governor's Commutation Application

Dear Governor Newsom,

My name is Jamie Thomas. I have known Joe Hunt for over thirty plus years, first as his friend, and now having been married to him for nearly 14 years. We have a longstanding friendship and an enduring loving relationship. I grew up in a traditional household with loving parents and my four sisters. My parents were married up until my father passed away in October of 1988. My father was with L.A.P.D. for twenty-four years. Growing up a police officer's daughter was always instilled in me to do what is right and just. He and Joe often spoke on the phone, and he liked Joe very much. My father reminded me to be a good friend to him. After all these years, I believe I have been, precisely because he has been more than deserving of my friendship, love, and support. Joe has enriched my life in so many ways and beyond measure.

When thinking about Joe's appeal for commutation on his sentence, I want it for him. Commutation is something I want for myself, too. I know that when most people think about a pardon or commutation of a prison sentence that it only benefits the prisoner. It's not him alone that benefits; commutation can serve more than just the prisoner. It is far-reaching beyond prison walls.

I am a sensible and grounded person and a mature adult. I have only been married once and have never regretted my choice marrying Joe. He is a good and decent man. I love him very much and want him to be free to come home. Having spent time with Joe under all circumstances, he has proven to be kind, loyal, loving, and stable. He has only gotten better. And, with every passing year together, we have both grown and gotten better. Being married to Joe is my primary relationship in life. He's my closest friend and partner. My life would be measurably a lot happier if you let him out.

Governor Newsom, you are a powerful man and have the ability to set things right. It is my greatest wish and desire for Joe's request for a commutation of his prison sentence to be granted. Not only for Joe. But for myself and for his sister and everyone else that loves, cares, and supports him. He's genuinely one of the good ones.

I have always believed that Joe deserves a second chance, primarily because of his good and kind nature and belief in non-violence. He is respectful and has been instrumental in helping others. While I have known Joe, during incarceration, he has never been aggressive, nor mentioned breaking the law, nor shown any indication that he thinks about or plans to

commit any crimes. Just the opposite, he has demonstrated an inclination toward helping people, such as his fellow inmates, to better their circumstances by turning their lives around through spiritual and or religious pursuits, education, healthy choices, life skills, etc. Whenever I visit Joe, someone will comment on what a good man he is, including a few of the C.O.'s as well as other prisoners. He has a strong moral compass and family values. Along with me, he also has a loving family of support that includes his sister Katherine, brother-in-law Michael, niece Kelly and fellow members of the Ananda Church who are devoted to him. <https://www.ananda.org>

Rather than being a threat to society, Joe would be an asset. He, to my knowledge, has never harmed, threatened, or treated anyone unkindly. He is a reliable, steady, and ethical person who has worked hard and persevered. Thank you for your consideration. I am happy to answer any questions that you may have.

Sincerely,



cc: CC1 Maldonado, CDCR

This is in regard to Joe Hunt, D-61863, Governor's Commutation Application

August 17, 2020

To: Governor Gavin Newsom

Cc: CC1 Maldonado, CDCR

Dear Mr. Newsom,

I am sure you are aware of how unfair this long incarceration of Joe Hunt has been.

I know Joe Hunt because he came to my rescue when he decided to donate to the project my husband and I had been working on for several years. We were trying to raise the funds to finish the statue we had dedicated ourselves to complete, in honor of the valiant yogi, Paramhansa Yogananda. It was through Yogananda's determined efforts that this whole experience of bringing Yoga to the West gave the ancient practice of yoga an opportunity to flourish in this new environment.

My husband and I felt that this ambitious undertaking should become more well known, thus we started working to get an eight foot tall bronze statue cast. We contacted a sculptor who was willing to work with us on this project. He, too, had become aware of the importance of Yogananda's tremendous undertaking and was willing to start creating the statue. Little did we realize the amount of money it would eventually cost. We spent several years raising the funds just to have the molds completed and then we ran out of money and appealed to people who might be able to help us.

Joe Hunt had been developing an interest in the teachings of Yogananda while in prison. His family informed us that he might be interested in donating to help complete the statue, so I wrote to him. He very graciously consented to make a sizable donation which gave us the ability to get the statue finished.

Yogananda's lasting influence when he came to America to bring these uplifting teachings is a real blessing for all the world. Particularly at this time, whether or not one has even heard his name, we are all reaping the benefits of his existence. It is his consciousness that has opened the hearts and minds of many people when they delved into his wisdom.

Getting this statue made to honor Yogananda, was a big undertaking for a couple of eighty year olds like my husband and myself. We so appreciated Joe Hunt's help not only for this project, but for many others that his family was able to make possible in his name.

Please help him achieve the opportunity to finish his life in freedom and in peace with the ability to contribute his gifts to the world.

In gratitude,


Janakidevi Steinmetz



This is in regard to Joe Hunt, D-61863, Governor's Commutation Application

To: Governor Gavin Newsom

Cc: CC1 Maldonado, CDCR

I am writing to ask you to commute Joe Hunt's sentence, to allow a parole board to consider him for release from prison. I don't personally know Joe, but he has inspired me through his actions while behind bars and at the same time inspiring me through so many in our community who know him well, and speak so highly of him.

I have come to learn how many of his fellow inmates he has selflessly helped with health and legal challenges, and I can only begin to imagine how much more he could help if he was out of the confines of prison. He even helped to raise a tremendous amount of money in support of our shared faith and spiritual community.

I believe any person should have an opportunity to reform, to have a second chance. In particular, Joe has maintained a remarkable zero-violence record while being in some of the most dangerous prisons in California. Further, he co-founded the first ever men's group in a California prison. Now, aged 60, Joe has been caught in a legal system for 35 years which doesn't appear to have given him a fair shake.

Please seriously consider Joe Hunt as a candidate for commutation. I wholeheartedly believe commuting Joe will eliminate a senseless taxpayer burden while providing a man who has proven he can be the gold standard of reformation an opportunity to offer so much to the world at large and in particular our community.

Thank you for your consideration. If you feel the need, you may contact me as necessary at the below contact information.

Sincerely,

!



This is in regard to Joe Hunt, D-61863, Governor's Commutation Application.

August 22, 2020

To: Governor Gavin Newsom
Cc: CC1 Maldonado, CDCR

Dear Governor Newsom,

My name is Jessica McCart and I am a Production Manager for an Engineering Firm in Richmond CA. I have employed here for 20 years, I have been married for 15 and have 1 son. I am writing you this email today because Joe Hunt has served 36 years in prison and I believe he is reformed. His sentence of life without the possibility of parole is far too cruel considering the evidence that was presented in his case. Joe Hunt has managed to maintain an impeccable record while incarcerated under some of the harshest conditions of the California prison system, that speaks volumes of his character. I believe no man should be locked up forever, provided they exhibit excellent behavior and he deserves a chance to live out the rest of his years as free man. It does not serve society to keep Joe locked up; it just wastes taxpayers money.

I believe for these reasons Joe is a very strong candidate for parole release!

I appreciate you taking the time to read this. I can be contacted at [REDACTED] or at [REDACTED] if you need to reach me for any reason.

Thank you,



This is in regard to Joe Hunt, D-61863, Governor's Commutation Application

To: Governor Gavin Newsom

Cc: CC1 Maldonado, CDCR

Hello,

First off my name is Tommy Flores and I am and always have been a close friend of Joe's since we first met almost 30 years ago.

I have spend many hours and years with Joe and know him to be a great person, inside and out. He is who you meet: a kind gentle person. I have seen him personally help many, many other people over the years. He makes friends with many. To know Joe is to like him!

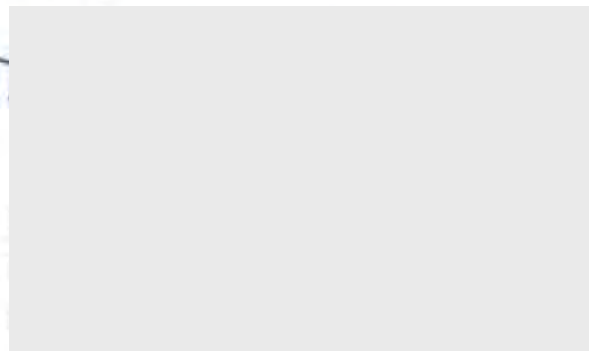
I don't know how to properly express how deeply I feel about Joe, but I can only hope and pray that somebody finally listens to what people have been trying for years to do: to free Joe! If there is anybody that I have ever met that deserves a second chance to learn how to enjoy his life out here in the free world it is Joe Hunt. Please help this man. He truly has a good soul!

Please, the prison system is based on giving second chances. Give Joe a chance. I know first hand. I have paroled 3 times since first meeting Joe. I have done many years for my poor choices. The last one I served over 20 years for making stupid choices or decisions. I have been out 5 years. I now own 2 houses, cars, trucks and bikes. I no longer commit crimes and do my best to make good choices. I am married with children and work my fingers sore usually 60 hours a week.

Meeting Joe and spending so many years, hours and days with him he always showed me how to live a better way; not only by example but also by talking to me, trying to teach me day in and day out how to be a better me and a better person.

I truly hope you are a fair judge of people because if so I believe Joe will finally get the chance to become a free man and I know he will cherish every single day and prove to all that he belongs out here a free man with us.

Thank you,



August 3, 2020

Governor Gavin Newsom

1303 10th Street, Suite 1173

Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Joe Hunt – D61863, Governor's Commutation Application

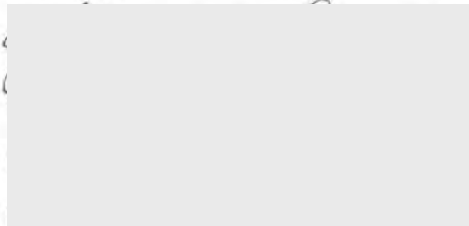
Dear Governor Newsom,

My name is Johanna Thomas. I am writing this letter to ask you to release Joe Hunt. I am born and raised in Southern California and currently reside in San Diego, California. I've attended California State University Los Angeles and San Diego State University. I am a mother of two boys and have a career spanning over twenty years in broadcast media sales. I have known Joe Hunt for over fifteen years, and I am his sister-in-law. Over the years, I have witnessed him treating my sister with the utmost respect, love, kindness, generosity and sensitivity.

We have a longstanding friendship and he has been a great support to me and my boys throughout the years. He is a spiritual person with a calm demeanour and has been kind, encouraging and a positive role model to my boys. I believe Joe deserves a second chance and do not believe he is a threat to society but rather an asset.

Thank you for your consideration. I am happy to answer any questions that you may have.

Sincerely,

A large rectangular area of the document is redacted with a solid grey box, obscuring the signature and any handwritten notes.

cc: CC1 Maldonado, CDCR

This is in regard to Joe Hunt, D-61863, Governor's Commutation Application

To: Governor Gavin Newsom

Cc: CC1 Maldonado, CDCR

Date: August 21, 2020

Dear Sirs,

My name is Linda Lockhart. I live in the Ananda Community in Mountain View, an intentional community based on the teachings of yoga and meditation. I'm the publisher of Spiritual Life Magazine which is devoted to helping people find peace, love and joy through applying practical spiritual principles to their daily lives. I have been practicing yoga and meditation for over 45 years. I have been a member of Ananda Church and lived in Ananda communities for 30 years.

I am writing to ask you to commute Joe Hunt's sentence, to allow a parole board to consider him for release from prison.

I've never met Joe since he's been in prison all the years that I've lived in California. But I do know his sister, Katherine Olivier, and her husband personally. And I know good friends and ministers who've visited him often in prison over the past 25 years. They've taught him our techniques of mediation. They've told me things he's done and said. I can see their great love and respect for him. The opinion of these long time friends who I know are truthful, honorable, and trustworthy means a great deal to me.

They've all shared what a help and a minister he has been to the other inmates. I have read heartfelt and moving testimonials from dozens of prisoners, prison chaplains, and staff who describe the positive effect he's had on those who knew him. He has helped prisoners of all backgrounds with health and legal issues, and he counsels them about ways they can solve their difficulties.

I'm especially inspired by one story which illustrates his position in the prison community.

Joe had been held in a county jail for quite some time -an intake cell filled with both black and white men. While Joe was away for some hours, the black men attacked the white men and severely injured them, so that the white men had to be taken to the hospital. When Joe (a white man) was ready to return to the cell, people warned him: "You'd better not go back into that room, you aren't safe." He responded, "I'll be fine." In a relaxed way, he walked back into the cell filled with the black prisoners who had just beaten up the white prisoners. They immediately welcomed him with hugs and said, "I knew he'd come back!" To me that shows that Joe had shared with those prisoners the type of kindness and respect for others that is unique in this world.

In addition to his track record of service to the prison community, Joe together with his sister and brother-in-law raised over \$1 million which they donated as a surprise gift to our church for the Temple of Light at Ananda Village that serves and inspires people all around the world. Without their gift, it would have taken much longer to build the Temple.

I share this here as proof that Joe Hunt would be more than able to support himself if he is released from prison and able to live in the community.

Joe Hunt deserves freedom from incarceration because his life has been a shining example of truth, self-honesty, selfless service to others, compassion, kindness and honor. Also he is now elderly, recently developed cardiomyopathy and is at high-risk for COVID-19.

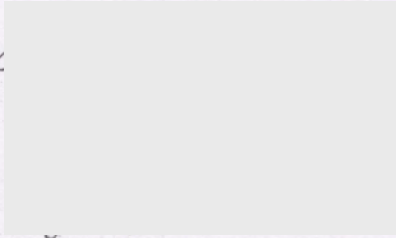
He is not a danger to society or anyone. Should he be released, there is absolutely no doubt in my heart or mind that he would be anything other than an asset to society.

I believe, for these reasons, that Joe is a very strong candidate for commutation. If he is released, he would be welcomed with wide open arms by our Ananda spiritual community.

Would you please give him a chance to be considered by the parole board for release?

Thank you for your attention and consideration to this matter. I would be very happy to speak with anyone who has more questions for me.

Sincerely,



FROM THE DESK OF

KAREN BESWICK

This is in regard to Joe Hunt, D-61863, Governor's Commutation Application.

August 11, 2020

To: Governor Gavin Newsom
Cc: CC1 Maldonado, CDCR

My name is Karen Beswick. I am a retired corporate marketing manager, and currently teach yoga and spirituality classes in Mountain View, California. I am a native Californian, born in San Francisco, and raised in Marin County, and have twin sons who attend USC in Los Angeles. I believe in a more personalized prison system in which prisoners who have served long sentences and maintained excellent conduct find support for a healthy return to society.

In February of last year I joined Joe Hunt's sister and brother-in-law in visiting Joe, and had a chance to speak with him about many different topics, as well as to tune in to his character and his spiritual nature. The time proved to be relaxed, filled with meaningful conversation, which included welcome counsel that he offered to his sister, moments of laughter and lightness, and moments of talking about the realities of his situation.

I believe that he has taken the many challenges of decades of incarceration and used them as opportunities for self-reflection, self-improvement and for developing a deep relationship with God. How he has had the inner strength to accomplish this is a wonderment to me, for what I see is a person who has brought a spirit of acceptance to the most grueling of human experiences, and made it his life's purpose to let it change him for the better.

At the end of our visit he asked that we take a few moments to hold hands and pray together. Then we sat in silence together, making God

[REDACTED]

the center of our awareness. In that moment I felt that this meant the most to him of our entire four hours together.

His heart is peaceful. His spirit is clear. His mind is aligned with God's will. Only his body struggles now.

It is my belief that the more than three decades of incarceration that he has served have been more than sufficient not only to fulfill whatever repayment to society was intended, but also to result in a person of rare fine character whose serviceful nature will be a welcome benefit to society and to the community that awaits his arrival with hope.

Please consider doing all you can to give Joe Hunt a chance to be considered for release now.

Thank you for your attention to this important request. Should you wish to contact me for any reason, I can be reached at kbeswick@me.com

Sincerely,

[Redacted signature]

Karen Beswick



[Redacted contact information]

This is in regard to Joe Hunt, D-61863, Governor's Commutation Application.

August 8, 2020

To: Governor Gavin Newsom
Cc: CC1 Maldonado, CDCR

My name is Katherine Olivier. I am retired and live in Atherton, CA and Nevada City, CA. I am married with one adult daughter. Joe Hunt is my brother, and we are extremely close. He introduced us to the Ananda spiritual path, which has been a huge blessing in our lives.

I have been dealing with Joe's trial and incarceration since I was 18 years old. I turn 56 this month. I have known him the longest of anyone and he has always been a wonderful brother – kind, supportive, and loving. I am very concerned about his heart. Why have the state pay for his declining health? We are more than able to take that financial burden. He might only have a few years left and I believe that he has proven he would be a benefit to his spiritual community, and I know he would be to me.

My husband and I are wealthy and would support him for the rest of his life if he were released. He will have a home, wife, community, job, family, and everything a person needs to live and be productive. The reason we are wealthy and not just well off is that Joe has given us great advice regarding our financial investments.

He has proven that he is not a threat to society by how positively he has lived his life in prison. It is one thing to do the right thing when your life is easy, but it is much harder to do the right thing in LA county jail and when one is placed in a level four yard, considered one of the toughest yards in California.

As a sister, I implore you to show mercy and let him have a couple of years of freedom before he leaves this planet. Please feel free to contact me for any reason using the above contact information.

Sincerely,


Katherine Olivier



This is in regard to Joe Hunt, D-61863, Governor's Commutation Application

To Governor Gavin Newsom,

Cc: CC1 Maldonado, CDCR

8/2/2020

My name is Nayaswami Krishna (Kristy Dewey). I have been a member of the Ananda Church of Self-Realization since 1990 and a minister since 1996. We have 46 established spiritual teaching centers and 148 meditation groups spanning 30 countries worldwide. 2.2 million people visited our worldwide website in 2019.

I am the manager of the spiritual talk-of-the-month club, of which Joe is a member. He receives transcripts of talks in the mail.

I first visited Joe in at the Stockton, California Healthcare Facility in June 2018 and have visited him frequently thereafter. I have corresponded with him by mail every week since early 2019.

I first knew of Joe's upstanding reputation as a member in our church in the early 1990's. I heard many stories from well-respected ministers who visited him in various prisons. These ministers gave him books, written lessons and instructed him in meditation practices and the teachings of the Bible and Bhagavad Gita.

Over the years, Ananda ministers spoke of Joe's vigilant spiritual practices and study. He is not bitter about his fate. Instead, he has focused his attention on helping other prisoners with their cases and giving them hope in their lives.

By the example of his positive attitudes and faith in God, he has uplifted the lives of many people.

I am inspired by the stories that Joe and other Ananda ministers told me about his prison experiences. He has been able to turn around very negative situations with potential for harm to himself and other individuals in the prison community - into positive outcomes.

I am especially impressed with the spiritual support he has given his roommate Alan E. Adams H86005. After a private visit with Alan, I could see that Joe has profoundly helped Alan transform his attitudes, his daily life, and his spiritual practices in a positive way. It was stunning to witness the facts of Alan's life prior to his term in prison, as he related them to me, and to see what and who Alan has become through Joe's example and constant spiritual support.

Joe's spiritual stature is of the highest caliber of any Ananda church member I have ever met. Amidst the complexities and challenges of prison life, Joe is able to uphold the supreme principle of placing the needs of others above his own needs. He is able to help others under all circumstances, regardless of the sacrifice that is required.

Joe has given me and other Ananda staff members much inspiration through creative ideas, to assist in our outreach efforts. He was inspired by God with the wisdom to help raise one million dollars, along with his sister and brother-in-law, to complete the Temple of Light building. The Temple of Light has already served thousands of people worldwide with in-person and virtual broadcasts of classes and events and will continue to do so in the years to come.

Upon commutation, Joe has the guarantee of permanent housing on our land in Nevada City. He will be warmly welcomed and esteemed by literally everyone (200 residents). He will be able to share the inspiration of his journey, and the spiritual teachings with others via in-person and virtual classes and events and also help with countless unfolding projects in the future.

Joe's spiritual stature and manner of so openly sharing wisdom and kindness with others, will be an inspiration to thousands. The sky is the

limit in his potential to do much good within the work of the Ananda Church of Self-Realization and far beyond.

If you have any questions, I would be privileged and happy to answer them at [REDACTED] or daytime phone or direct office line/ [REDACTED]

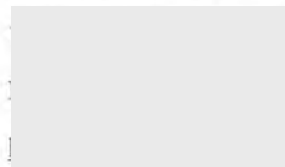
Blessings,

Nayaswami Krishna (Kristy) Dewey



Treasures Along the Path Talk-of-the-Month Club

Part of Ananda Worldwide Ministries



[REDACTED] 9am – 5 pm Pacific Daylight Time



Ananda

CHURCH OF SELF-REALIZATION of Nevada County

This is in regard to Joe Hunt, D-61863, Governor's Commutation Application.

August 22, 2020

To: Governor Gavin Newsom

Cc: CC1 Maldonado, CDCR

Let me first briefly introduce myself. I am a longtime resident member and minister at Ananda Village, a spiritual cooperative community in Northern California. Ananda was founded in 1968 by Swami Kriyananda (J. Donald Walters), with whom I worked closely as his personal secretary from 1990 until his passing in 2013.

Though I've not yet met Joe in person, I've been getting to know him over the years since 1992, when Joe first wrote to Kriyananda. I wrote him back then on Kriyananda's behalf, and we later exchanged letters on several other occasions when Kriyananda was for one reason or another unavailable to reply himself. I saw at firsthand how well impressed Kriyananda was by Joe, and how concerned about his situation. I used to maintain a list of those for whom Kriyananda was especially praying, and he had me keep Joe's name always on it. He always kept abreast of Joe's situation through the Ananda members who supported Joe most actively, and would often convey encouragement and bits of advice through them. He urged them, too, to do all they could to work for Joe's release. One time, at the request of Joe's wife, Tammy, he chose a spiritual name for her: a custom with us, but an offering made only to those he recognized as being spiritually sincere and dedicated.

In sharing those few details with you, I suppose I'm acting as the secretary even now, years after Kriyananda's passing! I do so because it speaks very well of Joe: Kriyananda was a great man (you can look him up at www.swamikriyananda.org), and a particularly good judge of human nature, as he needed to be in his position of leadership. Were he alive, he'd be writing you himself now a beautiful testimonial and strong appeal on Joe's behalf.

It's primarily on my own account, however, that I'm writing. We're a very close-knit community here at Ananda. After years of hearing about Joe from close friends who've visited him often in prison, friends I've known, respected, and trusted for some thirty-five years, I feel I've gotten to know Joe quite a bit better than I had from our early correspondence.

To convey to you the impact Joe has had on my own life, I should explain first that, physical distance notwithstanding, Joe has truly been a member of our community for many years now. That connection has grown naturally through his letters, through all that his sister and brother-in-law (both residents here) have shared with us about him, and even through a generous donation he made to the construction of our new temple. Above all, it has grown as a result of

who Joe is: the values he holds, and how he lives them. For our community is cooperative first and foremost in a spiritual sense: for the example, encouragement, and inspiration we offer one another in our quest to lead truly Godly lives. Speaking for myself, I will say that Joe is one of those who has inspired me particularly. His self-discipline, his dedication to his chosen path, his courage in never losing hope, but rather holding always before him the high ideals to which he aspires—all these, despite living in conditions that would crush the spirits of many, or at the least offer every excuse to settle for a life of mediocrity—these stand out for me. How paltry by comparison the challenges in my own life: Whenever they threaten to get the better of me, Joe's example is a wonderful goad to renewed effort and hope.

Joe's outstanding service to so many during his years in prison has perhaps been his greatest inspiration to me—less for the good it has done for others than for what it shows about him. The heart of the spiritual life is to live for something much greater than one's own personal preoccupations. It's easy to talk a good game, when times are good. Which way will one "break," though, when the chips are down? Ananda's founder once, when asked what the main qualification was for being given a position of responsibility, replied, "In times of personal difficulty, still to think first of others." This Joe has done: no small victory, and an inspiring example to a whole community.

I implore you, Governor Newsom, to grant Joe release from prison. He has earned society's mercy and trust as few could have, not only through punishment paid, but through the restitution he has given, and perhaps most of all by making of himself the exemplary person and citizen he has become. Already a long-established member of Ananda in all but body, he would find a warm welcome and embrace here in body as well.

Should it be your judgment, on the other hand, that Joe has not yet merited full forgiveness, would you not consider allowing him to earn that merit more quickly by releasing him all the same? Joe has done so much in all his years in prison to give back to others and to better himself. Now that he's so firmly established in this direction, how very much more effectively yet he could continue to grow through service to others were he at full liberty to do so. These considerations take on added importance in light of Joe's compromised health, which would expose him to greater-than-normal risk to the COVID-19 virus were he to remain in prison.

"A life is a terrible thing to waste." How especially true that is in these times and with this man. Our country always stands in great need of people who will work for the common good, but perhaps never more so than now. It's no exaggeration to say that Joe is extraordinary: for his talents, to be sure, but especially because it is his nature to use them to help others. Not just as Joe's friend, but as an American citizen who's very concerned for his country and countrymen, I urge you to grant this man his freedom.

I thank you for having taken the time to read and consider these somewhat lengthy thoughts. If you'd like to follow up with me in any way, please feel free. I'm most easily reached by e-mail, at [REDACTED], or by phone at [REDACTED].

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

Alan Heubert (Nayaswami Lakshman)

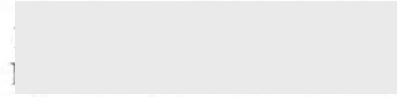




Ananda

CHURCH OF SELF-REALIZATION of Nevada County

This is in regards to Joe Hunt – D-61863, Governor's Commutation Application



August 9, 2020

To: Governor Gavin Newsom
cc: CCI Maldonado, CDCR

My name is Catherine Parojinog. I am the General Manager and CFO of Ananda Church of Self-Realization of Nevada County, and our cooperative spiritual community, Ananda Village. I have lived and served at Ananda Village since 1981, for the last 20 years in positions of increasing responsibility for finances and overall management.

I became aware of Joe Hunt (whom we know as "Jairam," a spiritual name given to him by Ananda's founder, Swami Kriyananda) quite a number of years ago. I was introduced to his situation by several ministers of our church who had visited with him personally, and taught him meditation. They have encouraged and supported his spiritual life and growth for more than 20 years, and have testified to his deep attunement with God attained through his steadfast practice of meditation and living by the principles of yoga.

Although I have not yet had the pleasure of meeting Joe Hunt in person, I have been able to speak with him by telephone. I wanted to do so in order to personally thank him for his part in collaborating with his sister and brother-in-law, who are also members of Ananda, to raise \$1 million for our new Temple of Light at Ananda Village. This Temple of Light is dedicated to the unity of all religions, and is an expression of Ananda's mission to serve as a beacon of light to the world. In speaking with Joe, I have felt his deep sincerity as a fellow spiritual seeker and meditator, his complete dedication to Ananda's work, and his gentle, even-minded calmness.

Prior to moving to Ananda Village, one of my jobs was as a parole and probation officer for the State of Maryland. In that role, I met and supervised many convicted felons, some of whom were incorrigible con artists and repeat offenders. I learned quickly the distinguishing characteristics of such people, and how to recognize their manipulative communications and behavior. In contrast, Joe does not exhibit any of those characteristics—either through his demeanor or actions. In fact, in his 36 years of incarceration, he has spent his time not only meditating and working on his own spiritual growth, but also on the study of law and other subjects of value. He has put this education to work in helping his fellow inmates with their problems. I have read dozens of letters and testimonials from those who have known him about his humility, kindness, compassion, and selfless offering of his talents and time to serve others.



Ananda

CHURCH OF SELF-REALIZATION of Nevada County

In recent years, Joe, who is now 60 years old, has begun to suffer from ill health and has a serious heart condition. Incarcerated when he was just 24 years old, he has spent his entire adult life in prison. Clearly this was his karma. But the inner peace he has attained, and his years of service to others, show that he is a different person than the young man convicted so many years ago. He is a contributing member of society, both inside and outside of prison.

The residents of Ananda Village would welcome him to our community, and I would be very glad of his experience in helping with financial and managerial aspects of Ananda. Therefore, I respectfully ask you to commute his sentence of life without parole, and give him a chance to be considered for release by the parole board.

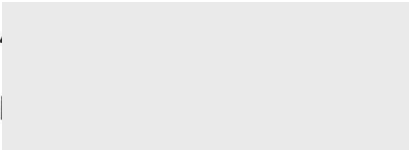
Thank you for reading this letter, and your consideration. I can be reached at [REDACTED], or [REDACTED], if you need to contact me for any reason.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

Catherine Parojinog
General Manager/CFO





August 19, 2020

To: Governor Gavin Newsom

cc: CCI Maldonado, CDCR

I'm writing in support of commuting the prison sentence of Joe Hunt, D-61863.

I've been a massage therapist and landscaper in the Seattle area for the past 35 years.

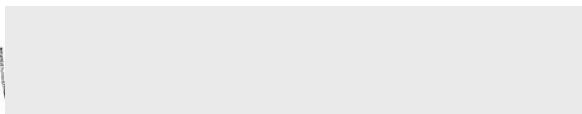
I learned of Joe's case several years ago through my friends in the Ananda Church of Self Realization, and have been haunted by it ever since. I was excited to learn there was a way I could add to the renewed focus of efforts towards his release.

I hope you can take the time to review the remarkable circumstances of this case and use the weighty power of your office to exercise the justice and mercy this exceptional individual so richly deserves.

Please feel free to contact me if I can be of any assistance in your work on this case. My e-mail is mariannesears@hotmail.com and phone is 360-385-1978.

Thanks so much for your public service and attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



This is in regard to Joe Hunt, D-61863, Governor's Commutation Application.

Michael Olivier

August 8, 2020

To: Governor Gavin Newsom
Cc: CC1 Maldonado, CDCR

My name is Michael Olivier. I am a retired technology executive based in Silicon Valley and Nevada City, CA. I am married to Katherine Olivier, the sister of Joe Hunt, and I have known Joe for 27 years. We are members of Ananda Church of Self-Realization, a community of spiritual seekers around the world who use meditation, devotion, right action, and selfless service to grow closer to God.

I believe the value of incarceration diminishes over time and that no man or woman should be locked up forever, provided they exhibit good behavior. Fiscal responsibility to the taxpayers, compassion for the human condition, and common sense all lead one to conclude that rehabilitated, elderly inmates who have strong community backing should be released.

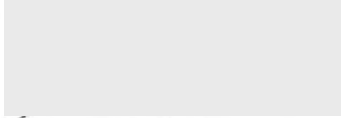
Joe Hunt is a good man who lost some very powerful people's money when he was under 25 years old. He has been caught up in a legal system that has treated him extremely unfairly for 35 years (see FreeJoeHunt.com for details). He has maintained an incredibly uplifted view of life, helped inmates with health and legal issues, helped Ananda church raise money, and built relationships with Ananda members. He has maintained a zero-violence record in the face of being housed at LA County Jail and three or more Level-Four facilities, which must put him in the top 1% of all California inmates. He has recently developed a serious heart condition and on top of that health concern now he is at high-risk for COVID-19.

It does not serve society to keep Joe Hunt locked up - it just wastes taxpayer money. If he is considered for parole and released, he would be welcomed with wide open arms by our Ananda worldwide community. **My wife and I have substantial wealth due to Joe's financial advice, and will fully support him for the rest of his life,** although I know he already has job offers pending his release and would have many ideas for how to make money to support himself and help Ananda.

Would you please give him a chance to be considered for release by the parole board?

Thank you for your careful consideration. I can be reached via the above contact information if you need to reach me for any reason.

Sincerely,

A rectangular grey box used to redact the handwritten signature of Michael Olivier.

Michael Olivier



This is in regard to Joe Hunt, D-61863, Governor's Commutation Application.

August 20, 2020

To: Governor Gavin Newsom

Cc: CC1 Maldonado, CDCR

Good afternoon Governor Newsom:

My name is Nancy Gifford and I am a psychotherapist and clinical social worker. based in El Sobrante, CA. I am also a mother of two young adult daughters, and was married to a law enforcement officer for twenty years. I believe in a fair criminal justice system; one which helps reform criminals who can be reformed and thus helps to make the world a safer and better one. Although people make mistakes in life, they should not be imprisoned for life unless they are a true threat to society. I do not believe that Joe Hunt is such a threat.

Mr. Hunt has been a model inmate for the past 36 years that he has served in prison. He has demonstrated caring for himself, educating himself and also offering support of his fellow inmates. Moreover, I believe that Joe Hunt did not get a fair trial. This, too, should be taken into consideration. To my knowledge, Joe presents no threat to society were he to be released today. I implore you to please give him the chance to be considered by the parole board for early release.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration on this matter. I can be reached at ([REDACTED]) or ([REDACTED]). Please do not hesitate to contact me if I can be of any further assistance.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

Nancy Gifford, Licensed Clinical Social Worker

[REDACTED]



This is in regard to Joe Hunt, D-61863, Governor's Commutation Application

August 2, 2020

To: Governor Gavin Newsom

Cc: CCI Maldonado, CDCR

Dear Governor:

My Name is Greg Dewey, and I have been associated with Ananda Church of Self-Realization since 1991. I have lived in an Ananda Community since that time, and have worked for the church for over 26 years. I first heard about Joe Hunt from the leaders of Ananda Palo Alto, Asha & David Praver. They described to us how Joe reached out to them for spiritual and meditation support, and of their meeting him in person; it was through them that I initially learned about his entire story. I have since heard many Ananda Minister's and members talk about their visits with Joe Hunt; everyone speaks very highly of him, and share of the inspiration they receive from him.

I have personally visited Joe at the California Health Care Facility two separate times in the last year. I came away from both visits feeling very inspired after being exposed to his positive attitude, the service & help he has provided many, and for just keeping his head high and acting with dignity under trying circumstances.

I feel that Joe meets all of the qualifications for commutation that you have mentioned at various times. He has already paid his debt to society by over 35 years in prison, all while showing exemplary conduct and contributing to others in every way that he can. Given his age and health conditions, I hope that you can find it within yourself to grant him the opportunity for freedom.

Joe is very bright and enthusiastic. After serving so many people while in prison, I feel with 100 percent of my being that Joe is ready to contribute to society in a larger and more positive way than he has been able to. He will find support in doing that with us, his spiritual family. I would welcome him at Ananda Village in Nevada City (where I now live), helping him in any way needed for a successful transition home. I ask you, how many prisoners have a chance to land in a spiritual community of more than 200 people ready to offer them friendship & support? Support for Joe comes not only from our local community, there is also an international worldwide family of supporters that are ready to welcome him with open arms. It is a priceless opportunity, and I honor your role in potentially making this a reality.

Thank you for considering Joe Hunt's commutation application, and I pray that you will make an honorable decision to give Joe a chance at a new life outside of bars. Please feel free to reach out to me if you have any further questions. I can be reached at [REDACTED]

Best Regards,

[REDACTED]

Greg Dewey





Ananda

CHURCH OF SELF-REALIZATION of Nevada County

This is in regard to Joe Hunt, D-61863, Governor's Commutation Application.

August 14, 2020

To: Governor Gavin Newsom
Cc: CC1 Maldonado, CDCR

Dear Governor Newsom,

My name is Wendy Johnson and I have been part of Ananda for 33 years. I serve as a minister and co-community manager with my husband.

I am a fellow graduate of Santa Clara University (Class of '85). My father, William Yabroff, was a professor at Santa Clara and co-founder of the graduate counseling program. My brother, Wade Yabroff, also attended Santa Clara as a political science major.

My experiences at Santa Clara University and Ananda have developed in me a commitment to right action, compassion, service to others and the courage to think for oneself and overcome obstacles. These are exactly the qualities I admire in Joe Hunt. Though I have not met him personally, many people within Ananda that I deeply respect have. Additionally, the accounts I have read of his service and caring to fellow inmates, philanthropy even while incarcerated, and his determination to make the best out of a situation that could easily embitter show him to be the type of person who can be of great service to our society. I add my voice to the many others asking that Joe Hunt be released from prison.

With good wishes and prayers for you in this challenging time. Thank you for all you are doing for California.

Sincerely,

Wendy Johnson

This is in regard to Joe Hunt, D-61863, Governor's Commutation Application

Arthur Wang

[REDACTED]

August 21, 2020

To: Governor Gavin Newsom

Cc: CC1 Maldonado, CDCR

I am writing to ask you to commute Joe Hunt's sentence, to allow a parole board to consider him for release from prison. While I have never met or spoken with Joe in person, I think of him as an extended family member. My personal connection with him is through his sister Katherine and brother-in-law Michael Olivier, with whom I am friends. I am also a member of the Ananda church and see Joe as a fellow member through his faith, dedication and selfless gifts to our community – most notably a \$1 million gift to help build our Temple of Light at Ananda Village.

I am a monk and have lived at Ananda Village in Nevada City, California since 2014. I was born in Cincinnati, moved to the Bay Area in 2005 to study computer science at Stanford, and upon graduating in 2009, started as a software engineer at Cisco Systems in San Jose. You might say that in this phase of life, I sought meaning and answers through the rigors of sciences and in the promise of a successful and lucrative career. While that was all well and good, I always knew in my heart that to live a happy, fulfilling life, I needed to have a strong foundation of love and purpose that was expressed in the lives of such figures as Jesus Christ, Martin Luther King, Jr., and perhaps an all too few saintly people (family friends and role models) I knew growing up.

I can say that I found a community of loving and purposeful people when I first attended Ananda's church in Palo Alto. Kindness and cooperation is a trademark of the people at Ananda, and we are a community that sincerely cares for everyone's well-being. Ananda Village consists of about 250 residents with households spread across a few hundred acres. We are neighbors and friends, and we live together on the basis of love and respect. When someone falls seriously ill, he has 249 friends he can call on for emotional, spiritual and practical support. When a child is born, or a couple is married, that joy is shared by the entire community. If someone needs help finding a job, leadership works together to find a solution for the person at hand.

Many religions teach that life is sacred because we are each children of God, and are made in His image. A teaching is one thing, but to live by it is another. At Ananda, we behold each other with love because we are each beloved in the eyes of God.

Our response to coronavirus has been stellar. We are fortunate to live in an area with a low-case rate and we have had no cases among our residents. When the virus started to spread in March, the entire community recognized the need to stay ahead of the curve, and joined our efforts in social distancing and wearing PPE, based on the successful measures that had been taken in South Korea. We began receiving daily reports from an Ananda member who is a doctor, minister and CEO of a local clinic, which have since been happening weekly. He does extensive research on the latest news and best practices and led the implementation of our community guidelines. Ananda is a worldwide work with thousands of members, mostly in the U.S., Europe and India. We have a culture of being highly conscientious and responsible. Except in one

unfortunate case of a couple who were in Italy at the time of its initial outbreak, there have been no cases of coronavirus reported among Ananda members throughout the world.

Joe's story has been a focal point for us for many years now. Our hearts and prayers have been with him through the years, but this campaign is our opportunity to offer our direct support for his commutation. Love is a state of understanding and awareness, but it is also expressed through acts of kindness and giving toward others. All accounts of Joe's service to his fellow inmates during his time in prison reflect an unconditional love that we should all seek to express. His gift to the Temple of Light was truly a blessing. It is a place of pilgrimage and represents Ananda's mission to share light with a world that desperately needs it. Joe's life has been a gift to many, and for what he has given, he ought to receive the opportunity to seek release before a parole board.

I understand you are working through many cases at this time. I wish you all the best in your efforts at this busy and trying time. Please feel free to contact me if there is anything you would like to discuss.

Sincerely,

[Redacted signature]

Brahmachari Arthur Wang

[Redacted contact information]





I write today to ask you to commute Joe Hunt's sentence, to allow a parole board to consider him for release from prison. I know Joe and have been inspired by him through his interactions with our spiritual community, through his family members, and through ministers of Ananda Church, who know him directly.

Joe has led an exemplary life while in prison. He has maintained a zero-violence record for over 35 years, putting Joe Hunt in the top 1% of inmates. I ask for your mercy, to allow Joe to be free.

He is an elderly, rehabilitated man who has Ananda, a spiritual community, waiting to welcome him home. Would you please give Joe a chance?

Very Sincerely,

August 20, 2020

This is in regard to Joe Hunt, D-61863, Governor's Commutation Application.

August 7, 2020

To: Governor Gavin Newsom

Cc: CC1 Maldonado, CDCR

Dear Governor Newsom,

My name is Lynn Sims and I'm a minister and the Human Resource Director for Ananda Church of Self Realization of Nevada Co. I became a member of the Ananda Church in Palo Alto, CA in the year 1991. I became aware of Joe Hunt's case then because the Spiritual Directors of that church were regularly visiting and trying to support Joe in one of his appeals.

Although I've never had the privilege of meeting Joe Hunt, I would sincerely like to. He has taken a very difficult situation and has tried to make the best of it. Helping many people from inside prison. Having learned meditation early on from one of our ministers, he has taught other inmates how to meditate and find some peace in a very stressful environment. Joe also helped his sister Katherine and her husband Michael Oliver to raise over a million dollars to help build the Temple of Light on the Ananda property in Nevada City, CA, where I now reside.

It has been heartbreaking to see Joe Hunt denied his freedom time after time. It's interesting to me that a man as intelligent as Joe, (had he been a hardened criminal) wouldn't have plead guilty to his murder charge; had he done so, he would have been released long ago. Joe Hunt has maintained his innocence for 36 years. I believe that comes from a place of integrity and adherence to the truth.

Perhaps because they never found a body, Joe Hunt's case has been sensationalized. The media has had a field day with his case, even making a derogatory movie which has not helped Joe Hunt's case at all. Perhaps it is the fact that he is innocent that leads media to believe he has no remorse. It would be difficult to show remorse for something you didn't do.

If you find it in your power and in your heart to commute Joe's sentence, I can promise you that we have a home for him and his wife here at Ananda Village where we will be honored to have him live out the days he has left in spiritual community with his spiritual family.

Sincerely,

Lynn Sims



Governor Gavin Newsom
cc: CCI Maldonado, CDCR

Re: Joe Hunt, D-61863 Governor's Commutation Application

Date: 8/14/2020

My name is Sonia Kim, aka Songja Shin (Korean name before I married to Jay Kim and before the US Citizenship.) I was a student @the University of Texas, University of Washington, and Michigan State.

I am a MSW Social Worker, retired in 2006 after 33 years service with the State of Washington, Children's Services. I used to visit juvenile detention and adult prisons for supervised visitation with the children in foster care.

I am a founding member of Korean Community Counseling Services in 1983, provided counseling services to children and families, free of services. I have been teaching meditation, free, to Korean seniors in Seattle since 2014.

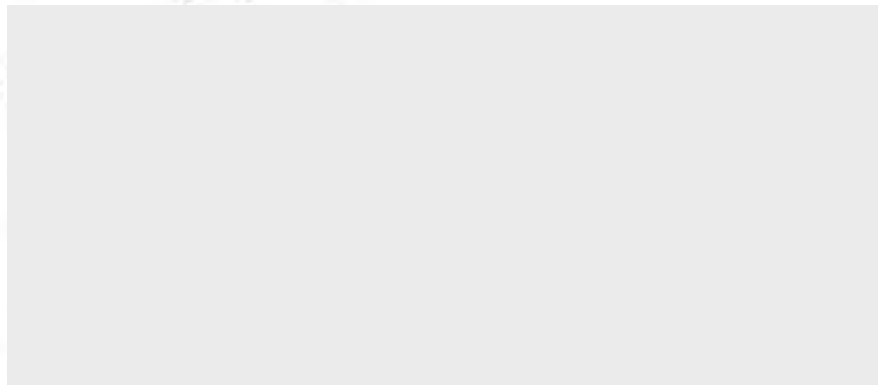
I believe your release of Joe Hunt would be most beneficial to the Ananda Community of friends as we will certainly hear about his progress and where he will be personally supported and supervised by many trusted ministers, selfless yoga and meditation teachers.

I can be reached by email: ([REDACTED]) or

Sincerely yours, [REDACTED]

Sonia Kim, MSW /

mailed to



August 21, 2020

Governor Gavin Newsom
cc: CC1 Maldonado, CDCR

Dear Governor Newsom,

I am writing to ask you to commute Joe Hunt's sentence, to allow a parole board to consider him for release from prison. I have read Joe's story from both sides, and been inspired by his personal rehabilitation while in prison. I know his family, and the ministers of our spiritual family, who have also shared inspirational stories of Joe's courage, compassion and caring shown to his fellow inmates.

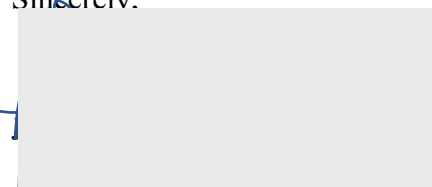
While I cannot pass judgment on the original charges, court proceedings, conviction or finding of innocence in the trials, I believe in the sanctity of human life and the power of a person to choose a peaceful path and to change themselves. Rehabilitation is a goal of our prison and criminal justice system, though few incarcerated are rehabilitated. Only those individuals who choose a higher path, and persevere despite the downward pull of unlawful habits around them, are able to truly change. Joe Hunt has worked hard in prison to develop his highest nature, has helped fellow inmates with health and legal issues, and raised money for his church. To uplift those around him with compassion and spiritual inspiration, Joe Hunt co-founded the first men's group, and maintained a zero-violence record, while being incarcerated in some of the most dangerous prisons in California. His actions put him in the top 1% of inmates.

No person should be locked up forever when they demonstrate excellent behavior that serves the higher good of society. Excellent government leaders, like yourself, understand the cost and the fiscal responsibility to California taxpayers of maintaining inmates, especially elderly ones. It makes sense for all concerned to release an elderly inmate, who has demonstrated rehabilitation, like Joe Hunt has. Indeed, it is a waste of taxpayer dollars to keep him incarcerated.

Joe recently developed cardiomyopathy and is at high-risk for COVID-19. Out of compassion, civic and fiscal responsibility, I implore you to use the powers of your position as Governor to commute his sentence. If Joe Hunt is released, he will be welcomed with love and support by our Ananda spiritual community. Would you please give Joe a chance to be considered by the parole board for release?

Thank you for your consideration. Please reach out to me, if you need to do so, for any reason.

Sincerely,



This is in regards to Joe Hunt – D-61863, Governor's Commutation Application

[REDACTED]

August 12, 2020

To: Governor Gavin Newsom

cc: CCI Maldonado, CDCR

Dear Sirs,

My name is Marjorie McDougal. I have come to understand that it is time to release Joe Hunt from prison.

What I have learned about Joe Hunt is that he has spent the last 30 years improving himself in the eyes of God and his teachers of Meditation. He has learned through his readings of Parmahansa Yogananda's teachings about how to grow, in a balanced and thorough way to rebuild his life in the way Yogananda has taught all his disciples. Meditation will bring you to a place to first accept where his character was when he was put in jail. Then an acceptance that he needed to change himself with effort and sincerity, pure enough to bring the grace of becoming anew. You don't find many souls willing and strong enough inside themselves to do that. Yes, he was in a place that many have that goal but without the strength of will that Joe Hunt has developed, many would never so clearly achieve this goal in the time and place he has.

Joe has recognized what his strength and weaknesses are and he's worked to increase his strengths. His kindnesses and willingness to be of service to others who found themselves in jail by their own faults or by a 'mistake' of sorts, just like himself. Without judgment and with compassion, Joe has helped many to find their way released. I've read the letters that have the ring of gratitude for his leadership and hope for a better life. He helped them find calmness, confidence, solution oriented, strength to be better, and then helped them make their lives better.

Joe learned and became benevolent, truthful, and respectful of other's belongings as he studied the teachings. You can hear this from the men and women who wrote letters about the service and the respect Joe gave without charge to fellow inmates he could help. This self-effort brought the grace of realizing the next steps in his growth as he served others and learned the teachings while in jail. Even to be so giving as to help Ananda, amazingly, with the costs of our new temple.

You, from what I understand, have records that show Joe has been cooperative with the system he has been in. He used his energy to find Truth, Love, Calmness, Creativity, Service to God through his fellow man. And the guards that have watched him have been impressed with his nature and his service. They too have asked for his release, I understand. This is the same with the leaders of Ananda who have met with him and guided him in these teachings over the years. They would know, really know, if the person is truthful and have progressed in the teachings of Yogananda. There would be no reason for them to also ask for release if it was not True. It

would not be in Joe's highest benefit, in any way, if he was not ready. They see someone who is ready, who is sincerely deserving and is capable of his continued service to mankind in his release.

Since '85, with Yogananda's and Ananda's teachings, I have worked hard to do much of the same in my life and like Joe, we have experienced how we are given experiences that show the peace, love and healing we search, being given to us from Spirit, from within. It truly changes you. And this is what I hear in many of the letters written about Joe. Our leaders at Ananda have written letters to you as well that tell of their experiences with Joe, of many changes and redirection of energy and a change in mind, that brought joy and peace, like a blanket of blessings to others that he doesn't have to 'work' at. It happens - due to his character, his inner focus, his choices in being kind to others, and his willingness to follow goodness.

Doesn't sound like someone who needs to be in jail.

I would be happy to speak with anyone who would like to chat with me about this.

Sincerely,

[Redacted Signature]

Marjorie McDougal, CMT, LMT

[Redacted Address]

