

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

**To: Governor Gavin Newsom**

**Cc: CC1 Maldonado, CDCR**

Dear Governor Gavin Newsom,

My name is Aaron Resendiz.

I am a meditation teacher for the church of Ananda based in Los Angeles, CA.  
I am currently married and live in a community of devotees in an Ashram.

I believe that prisons can be a transition for people to learn how to add value to their communities. I know that Joe Hunt has served many people in prison to make this transition. I haven't met him personally but I have read many things about him and I must say he is an example not just to those around him but even to myself.

We both belong to the same church and practice the same teachings, and I can say that I look up to him the same way I look up to my spiritual leaders in my community.

I sincerely ask for consideration for his release by parole board. I know that he would be a remarkable asset for our community in such need for examples of kindness, brotherhood and generosity.

Thank you so much for your time.

I can be reached via the below contact information if you need to do so for any reason.  
Sincerely,

[Redacted signature area]

Aaron Resendiz

Date: Au [Redacted]  
Phone N [Redacted]  
Email: ae [Redacted]  
Address: [Redacted]



Assisi, Italy - July 22nd 2020

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

Dear Governor Gavin Newsom cc: CCl Maldonado, CDCR

My name is Sonia Marcacci, I am Swiss and live in the Ananda Community in Assisi Italy. I am a certified Yoga and Meditation teacher.

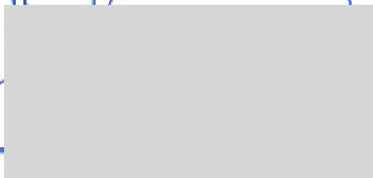


I admire Joe's tenacity in his spiritual search helping others with generosity, demonstrating love toward fellows. I believe he can continue doing more and more good deeds if the institution believes in the possible redemption of his life.

I ask you to consider supporting his petition hoping Joe can have a new chance.

Thank you for your kind attention

Sonia Marcacci



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August 5th, 2020

To: Governor Gavin Newsom  
CC: CC1 Maldonado, CDCR

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Adam Trowbridge, and I am writing in regards to Joe Hunt, D-61863, Governor's Commutation Application.

On the off chance that someone is actually reading this with regard to decision-making about Joe Hunt, I want you to know that I respect your time and I will be brief.

As I said, my name is Adam, and for my entire life I have prized high ideals such as integrity, morality, and kindness to others. I now live in a spiritual community that also prizes these ideals and more. On a daily basis I see these ideals play out in the lives of our members, and all of my previous skepticism about intentional communities has left long ago now that I live in one and I see what it's really all about here.

Many members have had personal relationships with Joe Hunt, and unfortunately I am not one of those people. However, enough of my friends and community members speak highly of Joe, and our new temple features a picture of Mr. Hunt with our spiritual directors. I have read his writings and heard of his good deeds, of which there are many, and I am writing today to ask you to immediately commute his sentence and release him from incarceration.

You, the powers that are reading this letter, have an opportunity to move past our archaic and unfair justice system into a new system that actually allows for reintegration into society for those who have shown themselves ready. For YEARS now, Joe Hunt has been patiently, peacefully, and quietly waiting for his release. He has been doing good for society from prison and it's beyond time he be allowed to exist in society with the help of his friends and family.

35 years is enough. The man is clearly an asset to society, and you now have an opportunity to show your high moral character by releasing Joe Hunt back into society under the care of his family and spiritual community.

If you'd like to speak with me in person, please call any time at 5 [REDACTED] and I will reiterate my plea in person. Either way, I hope you hear this message.

Regards,

Adam Trowbridge



Regarding Joe Hunt's, D-61863, and Governor's Commutation Application.

To: Governor Gavin Newsom  
Cc: CCI Maldonado, CDCR

Assisi, Italy - August 9, 2020

Dear Governor Gavin Newsom

I am writing to you to request the reduction of the sentence for Mr. Joe Hunt who has been sentenced to life imprisonment.

By honorable close friends, I have come to know that he is a man who has shown exemplary behavior during his time in jail. He has been an example for most people living inside the prison with him, and he has shown great nobility, generosity, altruism and integrity.

Joe Hunt has lived for so many years in prison and has tried to do good to others and has demonstrated noble and exemplary behavior. The justice system is designed surely to correct wrong behavior, to rehabilitate and transform someone so that the same wrongs are not committed again. A society that defends freedom so fiercely must surely give it especially to those who change and evolve and become shining examples to everyone around them. This is the best that a human being can become, to uplift and help regenerate society. Gandhi said, "Be the change you want to see in the world." Joe Hunt has certainly become the change and contributed to the collective improvement so necessary for the progress of humanity.

The exemplary conduct of Joe Hunt, in my opinion, should be rewarded in order to give hope and motivation towards positive personal change to those who through ignorance, selfishness or evil have committed a crime and have gone against personal and collective rights and freedom. Mr. Hunt has paid his debt; many years behind bars. He has suffered consequences to his actions but has shown that today he is a good and righteous man.

For all these reasons I ask for the Commutation of Mr. Hunt's status so that he can live the rest of his life a free man.

Thank you for your attention and best regards

Ana Cristina Rivera Garcia

[Redacted signature line]

[Redacted contact information]



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

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7/19/20

To: Governor Gavin Newsom

Cc: CC1 Maldonado, CDCR

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

Allow me to briefly introduce myself: I moved to California a few years ago from Seattle, WA with a desire to live in spiritual community. After serving for half a decade at a large insurance company out of college, I realized that I wished to give more fully to the world in a way that was more aligned with my values. Moving to Ananda Village in California and beginning to work for a nonprofit allowed me this opportunity, and I now joyfully live and work alongside spiritually dedicated individuals.

While I have never met Joe Hunt in person, many of my mentors and friends are close to him, having known and visited him for many years. These people who speak highly of Joe are those that I've personally witnessed giving their lives to serving and uplifting others, and to 'simple living, high thinking' (one of Ananda's mottos, so to speak). I am daily inspired by the humble, thoughtful, and selfless nature of my neighbors and friends. It is through their testimonies that I have learned about Joe Hunt, and it is through their integrity that I trust him.

I have learned of many inspirational things he's done in support of others while incarcerated. I was particularly touched by Joe's commitment to his spiritual friends by helping to raise over \$1 million as seed money for Ananda's Temple of Light. This magnificent temple, dedicated to all religions, was built just over a year ago in Ananda Village, CA. If you were to come through the main entrance, you would see a plaque and picture (just behind the welcome desk) that is dedicated to Joe, in honor of his unwavering support and generosity. It is my belief that we would not have fundraised as successfully if it weren't for his initial boost; perhaps we would still be building the temple.

I believe that after 35 years in prison, Joe deserves to be released for integration back into the community. He has already shown himself to be a positive influence on society and I believe he will continue to do great things for his community should he be allowed to re-enter. I wonder why we, as taxpayers, are continuing to pay for the incarceration of people such as Joe Hunt, people who have maintained a clean record and who continuously strive to support others within and beyond the prison walls. Should he be released, I can attest that Joe has a worldwide spiritual family awaiting him with open arms, and so many souls dedicated to providing him

transitional guidance and support as he navigates re-integration. Rather than a danger, I strongly believe Joe Hunt would be an asset to society.

Thank you for reading my letter in support of Joe Hunt. Should you wish to follow-up with any questions or concerns regarding my statements, I am most happy to correspond. I can be reached via my cell at ( [REDACTED] ), or alternatively, via email at [\[REDACTED\]](mailto:[REDACTED])

I sincerely wish the best for you in your service, and send my well wishes to you and your family in these uncertain times.

Best Regards,

[REDACTED]

Ana Kirsch



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

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Aug 11, 2020

To : Governor Gavin Newsom

Cc : CC1 Maldonado, CDCR

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

I am a practising surgeon at Bengaluru, India and I am part of Ananda community for the past 1 year. Ananda community is a world-wide and non-profit organisation, guiding people world-wide to live with peace and harmony irrespective of cast, creed, race and, religion and helping them to realise the highest purpose of life through service to humanity and spiritual guidance.

I came to know about Joe Hunt through the article from Ananda community, I felt inspired by his accomplishment though being in prison for the past 35 years. I can attest that Joe who has lived up to the expectation of prison authorities for the past 35 years is a completely reformed man. He will be happy to serve the society at large if you could commute his sentence.

Thank you for reading my letter in support of Joe Hunt. For any queries or concerns regarding my statements I can be reached by mobile +91 [redacted] or via email [redacted].

Best Regards

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Anand Arumugam



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

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To Governor Gavin Newsom

cc: CC1 Maldonado, CDCR

Dear Sirs:

My name is Margery Cornell. I am a minister and a teacher at a spiritual community called Ananda Village. Our spiritual lives here are based on meditation, self-honesty, love for God, and service to others. We believe the best way to help others is through kindness and respect and to help them find inner peace using techniques such as meditation. I began serving this community almost 50 years ago.

Interestingly, though I've never met Joe Hunt, for several years now I've considered him both a friend and an inspiration, due to his interactions with our community and with good friends of mine who visit him often in prison.

Over the years, many dear friends whom I respect and who are inspiring leaders in our community have visited Joe Hunt often. They've taught him our techniques of meditation. They have told me things he's said and the great love and respect they have for him. This means a lot to me.

They've also shared what a help and a minister he has been to other members of the prison community. 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 work on appeal letters, or counsel them in their difficulties.

One story especially impressed me – it speaks volumes. Joe had been held in a county jail for quite some time – an intake cell filled with black men and with 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 all the white prisoners. They immediately welcomed him with hugs and said, "I knew he'd come back!" To me that illustrates that Joe had shared with those prisoners the type of kindness and respect for others that is unique in this world. I think it illustrates a very special caring for other people.

I have heard through friends about times Joe has prayed to God in difficult situations he's faced, and the type of responses that have come. I would call them small miracles. To me, these show a man who is living deeply connected to God.

In reading the dozens of grateful letters from those who've known Joe or whom he has helped, I've had the feeling that this man, Joe Hunt, would not simply be worthy of parole – that he would be an exceptional addition to our society. I have seen a short video talk he gave, and read a few messages from him. Each of them I found beautiful and inspiring.

I have lived, as I said, for almost 50 years in this intentional community, Ananda Village, in the Sierra Nevada foothills outside of Nevada City. There are about 200 adults and 20 children who live in our small Village. (We also have a worldwide work of 6 other communities and many teaching centers around the world). Most people in our Ananda Village have had the same type of introduction to Joe that I have had. I know he would be enthusiastically welcomed here.

I mention this last fact near the end of my letter because I (and most other members of the community) had already made up our minds about Joe before the following event happened. Ananda Village was, at the time, building a temple for our worldwide work, and Joe and his sister and brother-in-law knew we would have trouble raising the full amount needed to complete the temple. So they worked together to earn over \$1 million through investments and donated this to the community as a surprise!

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 our community.

I would be very happy to speak with anyone who has more questions for me.

Sincerely,



Margery Cornell

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This is in regard to Joe Hunt, D-61863, Governor's commutation application

Annapurna Daniela Mugavero  
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Sunday August 9, 2020

Dear Governor,

I am professional Tourist Guide in Italy, and serve for the Association  
"Education for Life", with the Teacher Training.

I do not know personally Mr. Joe Hunt, but I heard the most wonderful  
testimonials about him from my close friends, J & D Novak, who have known  
him for long time.

I feel a great sadness about Joe's current situation in prison, but I do trust that  
with God's help, it will be possible to see him getting back his freedom through  
your intervention.

I deeply appreciate any help you can give for Joe's cause.  
With best wishes and gratitude for your service.

Annapurna Daniela Mugavero

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**Ananda Center at Laurelwood, Inc.**

38950 SW Laurelwood Rd.

Gaston, OR 97119

503.746.6229

*An Education for Life Campus - Programs, Retreats, Conferences*

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

August 4, 2020

To: Governor Gavin Newsom

Cc: CC1 Maldonado, CDCR

My name is Jujuolui Kuita. I have been with the Ananda Church of Self-Realization since 2018. Since being on this spiritual path, much of my life has been as a sincere renunciate and devotee.

From 2000 to 2004, I served as a Sheriff Deputy for Contra Costa County (under a different name). I have learned the requirement for refining one's intuition during my service. Many authentic criminal-minded people were hard for me to even look at. Intuition taught me from hundreds of examples that this repulsive response had to be headed!

When I entered our newest Temple built at our California community, called the Temple of Light, I saw a picture of Joe Hunt, aka Jairam. All that I felt from his picture was a gentle, caring soul that would find joy in any situation. Later, I learned who Jairam is and why his picture is framed at the entrance of our Temple.

Our spiritual directors Jyotish and Devi speak of Jairam, of his story, and of his saintly behavior along his journey in prison. That is all I know of Jairam. We respect and honor each other by referring to one's spiritual name. These names are not given lightly, but by our spiritual directors who seek deep guidance, followed with great integrity.

There will be a celebration on 'many worlds' when Jairam is returned home to Ananda. Every one of his spiritual family members, including myself, will be there to welcome him home. His biggest challenge will be what to start first!

Thank you for taking the time to collect and read our stories, our compassion and our requests to release our dear brother Jairam.



God Bless you,

Jujuolui Kuita (aka aramati)

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**Ananda Center at Laurelwood, Inc.**

*An Education for Life Campus - Programs, Retreats, Conferences*

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

[Redacted]

To Governor Galvin Newsom,

cc: CC1 Maldonado, CDCR

My name is Maria Antonia García-Galindo, I live in Ananda Village since 2018 and serve in Ananda Church of Self-Realization at the Spanish Ministry.

I've heard about Joe Hunt from his letters, and from common friends and his relatives when I first moved here. It has been so inspiring knowing about him and his high values and morals, that he feels like a dear friend.

I've heard many inspiring stories that show how helpful and serviceful he has been all these years, even when it wasn't easy for him. He has served and helped so much from the prison, to many of other prisoners but also to Ananda (church and spiritual community in northern California), which I'm a member and Joe is part of the congregation.

**His life has been inspired and he has lived by the principles of service, kindness and respect. Qualities our world and society desperately need.**

He has proven to be an exemplary person even in the hardest of trials and after 35 years of being deprived his freedom, friends and family are looking forward to welcoming him to his home at Ananda. My only wish is to see him flourish in his most deserved freedom.

Sincerely,

[Redacted]

Maria Antonia García-Davis

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**Regarding Joe Hunt, D-61683, Governor's Commutation Application**

August 5, 2020

Respected Governor Gavin Newsom  
Cc CCI Maldonado, CDCR

Dear Governor,

My name is Arthur Lucki and I am writing for the freedom of Joe Hunt, D-61863, Governor's Commutation Application.

I've lived most of my younger life in California and in 1974 moved to a spiritual nonsectarian community called Ananda.

In 1985 I moved to Italy together with my wife to help found Ananda Europa, and promote the ideals of simple living and high thinking in Italy and Europe. I still live here and am part of a larger community, sharing these values with guests and resident members.

I am currently and for the past 20 years have been the President of the non-profit Ananda Association for the Promotion of Social Welfare.

I have never met Mr. Hunt, although I have many friends who I've known and trusted implicitly for 40 years that personally have visited him over many years, and have shared his life story with me.

Usually one reads about these types of stories in the newspaper without having direct knowledge of the person and what he has done to help others in need. Joe Hunt is an outstanding example of a person who put aside his tragic circumstances in life to help others. During his 30-plus years in prison he has organized and helped innumerable other inmates to obtain their parole or release from prison. He also helped inmates spiritually by teaching meditation, sharing and living the ideals of non-violence and how to live in society by having a productive lifestyle.

Joe Hunt has also helped other organizations and individuals not in prison to realize their goal of living a life free of constant stress, worry and anxiety. He has demonstrated for many years that he is the type of person this society sorely needs.

Please give Joe Hunt your utmost consideration in releasing him from prison. He has many friends waiting to greet and support him in California.

If you wish to contact me I am reachable by cell phone at ( [REDACTED] 4 or [REDACTED] .

Thank you for your kind consideration,

[REDACTED]

Arthur Louis Lucki, President  
Ananda Associazione, APS



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

August 9, 2020

To: Governor Gavin Newsom

Cc: CC1 Maldonado, CDCR

My name is Bryan McSweeney. I was born and raised in California, and I am a member of Ananda Church of Self-Realization, headquartered in Nevada City. My wife and I currently live in the Ananda meditation center in Delhi, India.

I wholeheartedly support Joe Hunt's petition for release from prison. I have not met Joe personally, but have become very familiar with his case, and have followed his progress for some years. Friends whom I respect very much, and whom I have known for many years, including my own uncle and aunt, have visited Joe repeatedly and have remained in close touch with him. I deeply trust their judge of character and they speak very highly of Joe, and the progress he has made. I understand that Joe's prison chaplains, counsellors and guards also view him very positively.

I have always believed in helping people positively transform themselves. This is the core ideal behind rehabilitation. Joe appears to be a shining example of such a transformation. This is backed by much evidence of the good he has done. I feel he could do much more good if he were freed from prison at this time. He would be a great asset to society.

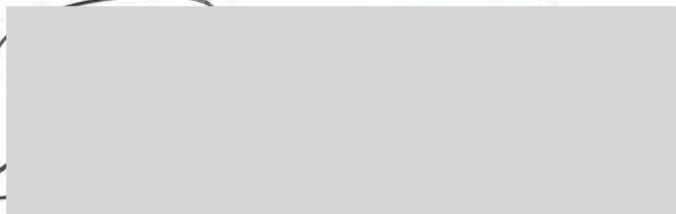
I ask that you please give him a chance to be considered for release by the parole board.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me: [t \[REDACTED\]](#)

Thank you for your kind consideration of the compassionate release of Joe Hunt.

Sincerely,

Bryan McSweeney



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

August 3, 2020

To: Governor Gavin Newsom

Cc: CC1 Maldonado, CDCR

Dear Go. Newsom and CC1 Maldonado,

I am writing to you in regards to Joe Hunt, all the way from across the ocean. My name is Osnat Levin and I live in Israel. I have been a member of Ananda Church of Self Realization and of Ananda Sangha Online for the past 10 years and I am currently undertaking the Ananda meditation teacher training program online. I am a school teacher by profession and I believe in that by sharing the love that I have in my heart I can bring about change, with all whom I meet.

I first heard of Joe Hunt through my Ananda ministers, primarily Asha Nayaswami, and Devi Novak who know Joe personally. Later I came to stay for a period of 6 months in the Ananda Village community and have befriended Michael and Katherine Olivier, Joe's sister and her husband, who have shared with me more about him.

Every time I think about Joe's story, read his letters or see his pictures, I cannot but be filled with Awe at the extraordinary personal accomplishments he has attained. I am touched by his kindness and compassion and inspired by his perseverance and open hearted acceptance. Paramhansa Yogananda taught that joy lies within, and that in order to attain true freedom from ego identification and be fully one with the Divine we should practice being even-minded and cheerful at all times, love all as brothers and sisters in God and be grateful for all that we receive from him. I cannot think of a harder teaching to practice at times of incarceration. Joe has not only lived by these teachings but has managed to inspire our entire community, myself included, with his commitment and honest devotion to God from his various cells over the years.

I can only imagine how many more he can inspire should he be allowed to do so in person, as a free man. I have never met Joe in person, but from his letters and actions over the years I find in him a fellow parishioner and a friend, and I recognize in him the same desire I feel in myself - to serve God. Which is why I feel confident in writing to you on his behalf, adding my voice to the plea that he will finally be released.

During my stay in the Ananda Village community I witnessed first-hand the love and respect the community members have for Joe, and I am without a doubt that he will find a warm welcome, a home and the support of both a physical and a virtual community upon his release.

Should the need arise, I am more than happy to answer all and any question regarding all the information and statements I have given in this letter.

I can be reached at [REDACTED], or by Email: [REDACTED] (Should cellphone communication be attempted with me, please take note of the country dialing code and time difference).

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

Osnat Levin



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**Jill Barker**

**August 10, 2020**

**Governor Newsom**

1303 10th Street, Suite 1173  
Sacramento, CA 95814  
(916) 445-2841

Re: Joe Hunt, D-61863; Governors' Commutation Application

Dear Governor Newsom:

My name is Jill Barker and I am a California native. I've lived and worked all my life in California and feel privileged to be a citizen of this good country. I am a single parent of one (very successful) daughter and have one adorable grandson. I owned my own business for many years and appreciated all the wonderful people I met who helped me and am grateful for all the people that allowed me and my team to help them. I am currently retired and am devoting my remaining life to God, my family and serving others wherever possible.

About ten years ago, I became acquainted with and aware of Joe through my affiliation with Ananda Church of Self Realization and our Spiritual Directors Jyotish & Devi and our founder, Swami Kriyananda. I am also friends with Joe's sister, Katherine, & Kelly & Michael Olivier.

I have observed that Joe has done marvelous work to know God, transform his life in spite of many difficult obstacles, and assist many, many others in finding their way toward recovery, rehabilitation and a meaning in life. He ministered & offered legal assistance to help many inmates. Joe seems genuinely determined to lead an exemplary life and be a role model in a good way!

He has been extremely inspiring to me and to most everyone I know who knows him. I marvel at his courage and ability to persevere in challenging times always seeing the good in people!

It is truly not in societies best interest to keep Joe incarcerated. He is a capable, caring, trustworthy person who now is a citizen who can benefit us all were he to be free among us.

He will be welcomed with open arms into our Community (or any other, I am sure, were they to know him). Upon his release, great joy will be felt by us all!

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

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Thank you for your serious consideration of my humble request!

If you have any questions, or wish to speak to me personally for any reason, please contact me at (██████████) or by email at [██████████]

Most Sincerely,

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 **Bill N. Barker**

cc: CCI Maldonado, CDCR

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

August 3, 2020

To: Governor Gavin Newsom

Cc: CC1 Maldonado, CDCR

Dear Governor Newsom,

I serve as the village manager of Ananda Village an intentional spiritual community in the Sierra foothills which recently celebrated its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary. I know Joe Hunt through his interactions with our community and time I have spent reading about his case and his life during his more than 35 years in prison.

I am fully convinced that Joe Hunt poses no threat to society and his continued incarceration serves no purpose. Freeing him would relieve the taxpayers of California from the burden of supporting his stay in prison. His release would endanger no one.

Of much greater importance in considering his release is the character Joe Hunt has exhibited during his imprisonment. Never wavering in his insistence on his innocence, he has not grown bitter from his time in prison. Instead he has shown only kindness and service to his fellow prisoners. Many of the staff and guards at the institutions where he has been held have added their voice to those of his fellow inmates in praising Joe's behavior and character.

Joe Hunt is not just an exemplary prisoner he is an exemplary human being. Joe has an extraordinary intellect coupled with self-discipline and will power. He has spent his time in prison educating himself to serve as a legal advocate, teacher, and counselor. He thinks first of others and how he can be of service to them. Individuals who land in prison are perhaps not the easiest to get along with but Joe has been universally accepted and shares friendship with many many people in this diverse and potentially difficult community.

His helping hand has gone beyond the prison walls. He has helped our community by offering ideas and suggestions based on his extensive knowledge of financial and legal matters, and has helped us raise money to support our work sharing the liberating techniques of yoga and meditation.

As someone who aspires to live a spiritual life dedicated to serving God through service to others, Joe Hunt is a tremendous inspiration to me. It is not always easy to remain steadfast in the pursuit of high ideals and aspirations, even when living in a community of like-minded people such as Ananda Village. I can only imagine how much more difficult this pursuit would be in the challenging environment of a prison. Yet Joe has remained supremely dedicated to the ideals and practices of his chosen path to the Divine. When I waiver I only have to think of the example of Joe's life to gain new inspiration in my pursuits.

I have high hopes that reason and justice will prevail in Joe's case. When he is released he will be welcomed to Ananda village. A person of his talent and energy will have no trouble finding a place in our community. We will welcome him with open arms and make sure he is taken care of during a period of transition to a new life. I have no doubts that the transition will be very short and soon after his release he will be contributing tremendously to life here, just as he has in any place he has found himself during his lifetime.

I strongly urge you to consider commuting Joe Hunt's life without parole sentence.

I am happy to communicate further and help in any way I can. Please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

A rectangular grey box redacting the signature of Peter Atman Goering.

Peter Atman Goering  
Ananda Village manager

A rectangular grey box redacting the contact information of Peter Atman Goering.

Aumkara Newhouse

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August 8, 2020

Governor Gavin Newsom  
cc: CC1 Maldonado, CDCR

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

My legal name is Aumkara Newhouse, which I legally changed from James Newhouse after 10 years of meditation (beginning in 1987) as it is taught at Ananda Church of Self Realization. I am becoming a calmer, more contented, and more self-directed person through the way of life Ananda inspires.

Though I was successful in my profession - MSc in Metallurgical Engineering and employed at Lockheed, Sunnyvale, a sense of inner completeness eluded me. The key to inner peace and joy Ananda's teaching have given me continue refine me daily and build that sense of inner completeness. In addition, Ananda teaches Energization Exercises which I have practiced twice daily (9-12 mins/session). These are a huge part of me surviving a head-on 100 mph combined speed car crash in 2017. Without them and meditation it is unlikely I would have recovered enough to write this letter. You may find a brain glitch or two in this letter. Please forgive them.

The first person I met from Ananda was Asha Praver, now Asha Nayaswami. Her clarity and discernment impressed me enough to want to learn her approach to meditation. This is the same person that Joe Hunt met. My experience of Asha is that she is rarely if ever confused in accessing a person or a situation.

Two other people Joe has met that I have personal experience of their discernment and clarity are Kevin (Ananta) McSweeney and Maria McSweeney. Again I have rarely found them to be unclear in assessing a person or a situation. Their assessment of the situation:

- His demeanor and depth is now one of integrity
- Joe Hunt has spent over three decades in prison
- He has health issues which make him a higher risk to COVID 19

These three people's clarity as to Joe Hunt's integrity and his actions (example: fund raising a million dollars for a temple) corroborate the conclusion that:

- Joe Hunt would be a greater asset to Society outside of prison
- He would enhance any community he was living in
- All Ananda communities would go out of their way to support him with housing, medical help and most importantly, friendship.

In summary, please approve Joe Hunt's commutation application. I believe it is the right thing to do in this situation.

Sincerely yours,

[Redacted signature]

Aumkara Newhouse



Re: Joe Hunt, 0-61863, Governor's Commutation Application

To: Governor Gavin Newsom

Cc: CC1 Maldonado, CDCR

August 11, 2020

Dear Governor Newsom,

My name is Badri Matlock and am family man, community manager, and dedicated spiritual seeker in Northern California. Despite the chaotic times we are in, I am confident and proud in our great Nation and State's commitment to freedom, justice, happiness and health for all.

I am writing with deep concern about a man who I know well, albeit indirectly, to be a truly noble, inspirational and kind soul: Joe Hunt. Mr. Hunt is a dear friend and relative of many loved ones, and I implore you sincerely to consider his freedom from incarceration.

For over thirty years, Joe Hunt has been not only a model inmate, but also a shining light among all who encounter him. His personal and legal counsel, spiritual support, generosity and kindness have touched literally thousands of people's lives from his prison cell.

When Joe Hunt is released from prison there will be a tremendous rejoicing among so many family and friends; and besides living the remainder of his life in peace, I believe he will continue to touch so many, many people with his humble and inspiring character. This great man deserves to be free—please earnestly consider commuting his sentence. We await your response with full and open hearts.

Sincerely,

Badri Jordan Matlock



Nevada City, CA

5 [redacted]

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

1 [REDACTED]  
1 [REDACTED]

August 12, 2020

To: Governor Gavin Newsom  
Cc: CC1 Maldonado, CDCR

Dear Sirs,

My name is Holger Klippstein, and I am writing in regard to Joe Hunt. I live in an intentional spiritual community here in California called Ananda Village, where I work in the communications department as a videographer and film editor. I have been a minister on this path of Self-realization and lived in community for many years, first at our center in Italy and now in California. We strive to live in harmony with each other and our environment, and to serve God in our daily lives.

I first heard about Joe Hunt and his situation a few years ago, through friends of mine that have known him for a long time. As he has lived his life as a devotee and practitioner of the same path as mine, I think of him as a spiritual brother. Everything I have read and heard about Joe leads me to believe that he deserves to be set free. He has been an exemplary prisoner and has helped his fellow inmates in countless ways over the years.

I feel that he will be an asset to society outside of prison, where he will have the opportunity to do even more good. I think his behavior speaks for itself, as he has never wavered from wanting to help others any way he could. If he is released, he will have a secure place in our community, where friends and family members will be waiting to welcome him. Thank you for considering commutation of his sentence.

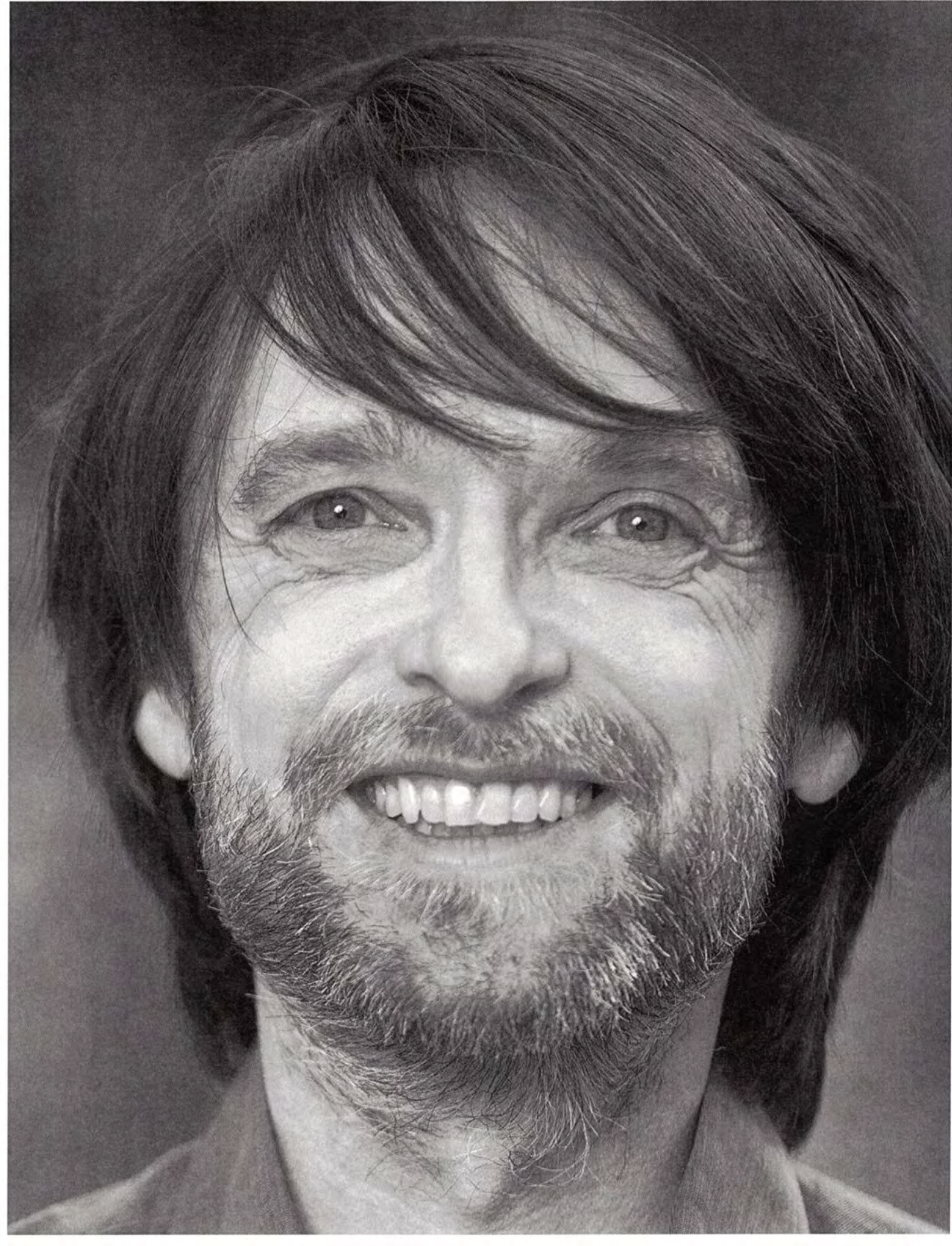
If needed, I can be reached at:

[REDACTED]

Kind regards,

[REDACTED]

Holger Klippstein



Regarding Mr. Joe Hunt, D-61863, Governor's Commutation Application.

August 9<sup>th</sup>, 2020

To: Governor Gavin Newsom

Cc: CC1 Maldonado, CDCR

Dear Governor Newsom,

My name is Aniello Alfieri I am Naples bul live at the Ananda Community for 25 years

I feel that a soul that dedicates his life to helping and serving others has learned a lesson especially after living a mundane life like his.

He deserves a chance Mr. Governor, if I was in his position I would take advantage to do even more good in the future.

Sincerely yours,

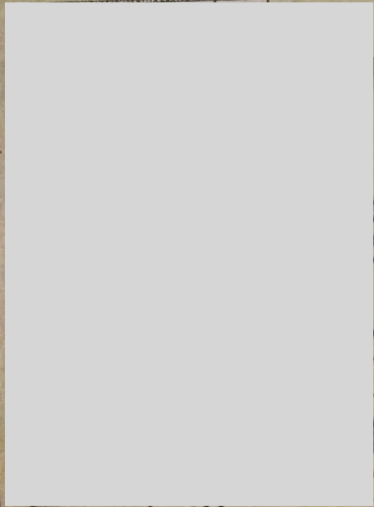
Aniello Alfieri


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**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 Warner Kaia Wong, an Ananda Minister, retired business consultant, currently living in Truckee, CA. I am a person of color married with two grown sons. As a Native Hawaiian, I practice Ho'oponopono, a system of forgiveness and service to others long before joining Ananda.

I've long been acquainted with Joe Hunt's situation since joining Ananda back in the 90's. While I've had no direct contact with Joe Hunt, I've known many trusted individuals who have.

I support Joe Hunt's petition for his release by the State of California Commutation Board. He has the support of a loving family, friends and community that will ensure his successful reintegration back into society.

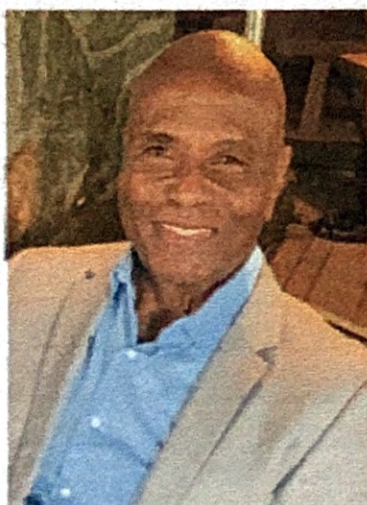
In summary, I want you to please approve the commutation sentence of Joe Hunt's Application.

I would also like to express my sincere appreciation to you for giving me this opportunity to state my opinion on this very important topic.

Here's my contacted information: [REDACTED] or ([REDACTED])

Warmest Regards,

[REDACTED]  
Warner K. Wong



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



August 10, 2020

The Honorable Governor Newsom

cc: CC1 Maldonado, CDCR

Dear Sirs,

My name is Robert Stolzman. I was a geologist in California for 25 years, the last 15 years remediating toxic spills to the soil and groundwater. I have been a resident at a spiritual community called Ananda Village in the Sierra foothills for 18 years. I am a monastic and serve as their computer network administrator.

For 25 years I looked for a spiritual home to no avail. Then I came to Ananda on a week-long bicycle tour where we camped at the Expanding Light Retreat. When I met the first person from Ananda, I immediately recognized by the light in their eyes and the smile on their face that they clearly had what I so desperately had been wanting for many years. I felt at home, and was deeply moved by this expression of the truth of the teachings of yoga and meditation, the sincerity of the people and their joyful enthusiasm.

While I have never met Joe, from what I have read about him and especially from the testimony of people I live with, respect and trust, I feel that I have come to know, in essence at least, who he is and the principles that guide his life.

Joe has navigated prison life without violence while serving others, bringing help and hope to those in a difficult situation, and all the while maintaining a decades-long meditation practice in prison and inspiring others to follow his lead. No small feat! Reading the 80 pages of testimony from inmates and prison staff submitted in Joe's last appeal for release, his long-term commitment to lovingly serving others and bringing peace and hope wherever he goes is readily apparent. He

clearly demonstrates the courage to live up to his selfless principles in the cold, hard light of day.

Joe is more than a model prisoner, far exceeding what one would expect of an inmate. There is simply no benefit to anyone in keeping Joe incarcerated. There are no new lessons for him to learn in prison, and he is certainly no threat to society. There is no justification for the taxpayer dollars spent to keep Joe in prison.

Joe's release is important to our whole community. Most of the residents of Ananda Village know Joe the same way I do, and care deeply about him and are deeply vested in his wellbeing. Testimony of Joe's deeds and his underlying attitude and view of life clearly show that he has been more than rehabilitated. **I know** he would be enthusiastically welcomed here and would find this his home. His sister, brother-in-law, 200 plus residents of Ananda Village, and our world-wide community would welcome him with open arms.

I urge you to seriously consider Joe's release, especially with current conditions. If I can serve in any way to expedite this, please contact me at [REDACTED] or [REDACTED].

Best regards,

[REDACTED]

Robert Stolzman



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

August 6<sup>th</sup>, 2020

To: Governor Gavin Newsom

Cc: CC1 Maldonado, CDCR

From what I understand about Joe Hunt's case, it seems like he has served enough time. Please consider his release. I think he has proved that he is a beneficial, uplifting member of society. If he were to be released from prison, he would be able to contribute even more good to society.

Sincerely,

Jemal Smith



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

August 6, 2020

To: Governor Gavin Newsom Cc: CC1 Maldonado, CDCR

Dear Sirs,

My name is Vineet Nahata and I am writing this letter in regard to Joe Hunt, D-61863, Governor's Commutation Application.

I am from India and live in one of the monasteries of Ananda Sangha (Ananda Church of Self-realization). I was a Chartered Accountant by profession and in my desire to seek deeper meaning in life, I found *Ananda* which inspired me to lead a life of inner fulfillment and joy. As a result, I quit my profession and became a monk, now serving individuals in the path of yoga, meditation and right living.

While I have never met Joe Hunt in person, many of my friends and mentors who have met him, hold him in the highest regard. The friends and mentors I refer to, are those, towards whom I have deep respect and loyalty, who by their example have motivated my life countless number of times. And it is by my faith towards them that I trust the integrity of their testimonials of Joe Hunt.

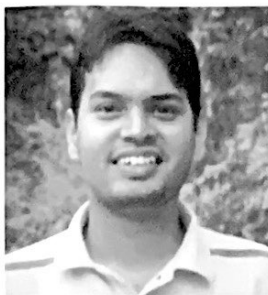
Having learnt that he has spent over 35 years in prison and the fact that he has been a positive influence on individuals both within and outside the confines of the prison walls, I can only imagine what greater influence would he be outside the prison walls. I've believed the purpose of jail is to reform and learn from the errors we've made, and that ultimately when one has reformed himself, he graduates and continues life from where he left. Hearing the story of Joe Hunt, I certainly believe that his is a story of inner transformation and a story which can now be more beautifully expressed, were he outside the prison (should you feel so too).

Thank you for reading my letter in support of Joe Hunt. If you would like to address any questions or concerns relating to my letter, you can reach me at [REDACTED] or +9 [REDACTED].

Kind Regards,

[REDACTED]

Vineet Nahata



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

August 5th, 2020

To: Governor Gavin Newsom Cc: CC1 Maldonado, CDCR

My name is Premdas (Rakesh Ramachandra). I am a monastic in the Ananda Church of Self Realisation. I help and support people in their journey to learn yoga & meditation, through online courses. I am based in Khandala, Pune in the state of Maharashtra, India. I have been associated with Ananda Sangha for six years now.

I am 28 years old now. I have known from my experience that we always don't make the best choices growing up. The best part is those mistakes help us learn and make us better people. Joe Hunt was 24 years old when he was arrested. He is now 60 and diagnosed with heart failure. Reading about his life in the prison shows me that he has learnt from whatever bad choices he made 36 years ago.

Will you please give him a chance to be considered for release by the parole board? After reading about Joe Hunt and listening to my colleagues and friends speak about him, I am convinced to write this letter of help to support our friend Joe Hunt.

If there's anything I could do to help in this regard, please contact me at [REDACTED] or call me at [REDACTED].

Sincerely,  
Rakesh Ramachandra



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

8/4/2020

To: Governor Gavin Newsom

Cc: CC1 Maldonado, CDCR

My name is Brenda Andrews. I am a member of Ananda Church of Self Realization. Ananda is based on the teachings of Paramhansa Yogananda, author of the spiritual classic, "Autobiography of a Yogi". Ananda just celebrated (last year) our 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

I have been a part of Ananda since the early 1990's, starting an Ananda meditation group in Boulder Creek, California. In 2003 I moved here to Ananda Village in Nevada City, California and began my time here serving in the Financial Services department. I have so wanted to be able to share my life with like-minded souls – living a life dedicated to meditation and service to others. It is a joy to be here.

I've never met Joe Hunt (who I know by his spiritual name, Jairam). What I know of him comes from friends that I do know and respect who have been to see him in prison regularly. I've also read many of Joe's writings which I've found to be clear, thoughtful and supportive of his inner being. He has shown himself to be a part of our community by his daily meditation practices and his generous support of Ananda's goals.

After over 35 years in prison, this man deserves to be released into a broader society. He has helped a broad spectrum of society within prison walls. Imagine what he could do for the larger society outside prison walls with the help of even more support of his spiritual life. Joe Hunt, who went into prison at age 24 and is now 60 years of age, deserves to be re-integrated into society.

Ananda has communities all over the world. I feel certain that he would be welcomed in any of them as a fellow gurubhai.

If you have any questions or concerns about my letter, I can be reached at [REDACTED] or [REDACTED].

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

Brenda Andrews



**This is in regard to Joe Hunt, D-661863, Governor's Commutation Application**

Carol Kretzmann

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N

August 9, 2020

To: Governor Gavin Newsom

Cc: CC1 Maldonado, CDCR

My name is Carol Kretzmann and I serve with communications for Ananda Church of Self-Realization of Nevada County. I arrived in California four years ago from Arkansas, connected with and visiting Ananda for more than 35 years not only related to my spiritual, meditative practices but also through family members who've resided and served at Ananda for decades. For over a decade prior to relocating here, I provided psychotherapy in Arkansas through community behavioral health centers. Now I am credentialed in CA, as well. Engaging in spiritual community, to me, is an actualizing step that utilizes strengths of combined efforts toward self- and societal-improvement.

I've learned of Joe Hunt from his sister and ministers and other leaders of Ananda, through their sincerity I trust their stories of his struggle and inspiration. Our Spiritual Director shared the perception, for example, that with daily meditation, Joe breaks the bars of inner "limitation that keep us bound," encouraging us all to become more free of negativity and self-involvement. Joe's persistence to remain hopeful, consider others' needs, adhere to non-violent principles, and be consistently constructive under adverse circumstances and health conditions, encourages me and others to persevere and develop strengths he's demonstrated, of calmness, acceptance, kindness, and cheerfulness. Prayers have sometimes been requested by our Spiritual Directors, Jyotish and Devi Novak, for Joe, having faced various health challenges and treatments. In this way, and from my deep concern for current overcrowded conditions in our prisons and detention centers during the pandemic, I share what I perceive about Mr. Hunt's new situation and ongoing behavioral strengths that he demonstrates.

Mr. Hunt's age and health conditions place him at high risk of fatality were he to contract COVID-19. His risks of infection are high while dwelling within the high density setting of incarceration. For this reason, his release is something I encourage to better maintain his safety. Additionally, qualities that Joe has demonstrated during his incarceration can be rare in the general society and I support his petition for release in the belief that increased visibility of his outstanding behavior and attitudes will have a beneficial effect on the public. He's shown that he lives by principles that are spiritually focused and naturally holding potential to reform society as a whole. By all reports, he's a model citizen and deserves commutation of his sentence.

The community of Ananda Village where Joe would reside were his sentence to be commutated, would heartily welcome his presence and integrate him into the housing and social structure of this model cooperative community. Joe will be able to expand upon healthy relationships that he's maintained even while confined. Among those who have been drawn to membership at Ananda are an extraordinary number of people possessing outstanding skills and character. In his having earned contributions made to our charitable projects, even while confined, Joe's shown skill to support himself. Our dedicated ministers have willingness and ability to assist Joe's transition to societal reintegration. I have no doubt that Joe Hunt's parole process would hold ease and success.

Thank you for your consideration. You are welcome to contact me with any questions or concerns, at [REDACTED] or [REDACTED].

Best regards,

[REDACTED]

Carol Kretzmann



Carol Redmond

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

July 22, 2020

To: Governor Gavin Newsom cc: CCI  
Maldonado, CDCR

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

I am a member of the Ananda Village, a spiritual community in Nevada City, CA. While I have never met Joe Hunt in person, many of my mentors and friends are close to him, having known and visited him for many years. These people who speak highly of Joe and I respect their judgment. Joe has served a long sentence, and while in prison has changed considerably into a person of humility and service to others. He has been instrumental in fund raising for our Temple, and is a member of our community remotely at this point.

I believe that after 35 years in prison, Joe deserves to be released for integration back into the community. He has already shown himself to be a positive influence on society and I believe he will continue to do great things for his community should he be allowed to re-enter. I wonder why we, as taxpayers, are continuing to pay for the incarceration of people such as Joe Hunt, people who have maintained a clean record and who continuously strive to support others within and beyond the prison walls. Should he be released, I can attest that Joe has a worldwide spiritual family awaiting him with open arms, and so many souls dedicated to providing him transitional guidance and support as he navigates re-integration. Rather than a danger, I strongly believe Joe Hunt would be an asset to society.

Thank you for reading my letter in support of Joe Hunt. Should you wish to follow-up with any questions or concerns regarding my statements, I am most happy to correspond. I can be reached via my cell at [REDACTED], or alternatively, via email at [REDACTED]

Carol Redmond



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

2 [REDACTED]  
1 [REDACTED]  
8 [REDACTED]

Governor Gavin Newsom  
cc: CC1 Maldonado, CDRC

I urge you to commute Joe Hunt's prison sentence so he may be considered for parole.

I am a minister of Ananda Church of Self-Realization of Seattle and have stayed updated about Joe Hunt's situation through my friends and fellow ministers who have visited with him over the past 36 years.

Their verification of the depth of his spiritual progress and integrity of his character which includes a steady positive attitude with great kindness towards others, has been a source of sustained inspiration to me.

Testimonies and letters of appreciation from fellow inmates show how Joe has substantially helped and counseled many individuals over the thirty plus years of his imprisonment. He cheerfully employs his talents and skills to assist others in prison and inspire them with his peaceful and mature example.

When released, Joe would be welcomed to our community where his own family resides and they will provide for him both a home and employment. Upon his release and with his responsible, generous nature, Joe will be able to apply his skills and energy to be of service to others.

I ask you to approve his application at this time.

You are welcome to contact me by phone at 2 [REDACTED] or by email [\[REDACTED\]](mailto:[REDACTED])

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

Carole Bartoo



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

To: Governor Gavin Newsom Cc: CC1 Maldonado, CDCR

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

His example of calmness, centeredness, kindness, compassion and generosity towards the other inmates, due to his good nature and to the practice of Meditation, have been a crucial inspiration to us to bring Meditation Programs into Prisons in Italy since April 2018, that have now become 5 programs a week at the Maximum Security Prison of Spoleto and at the Medium Security Prison of Perugia with a deep impact on the Inmates and on the Prison Police and Administration Staff. With full enthusiastic support of the Directors and supervisory Magistrates.

We believe that no man or woman should be locked up forever, provided they exhibit excellent 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.**

Based on a review of FreeJoeHunt.com, it seems that Joe, now age 60, has been caught up for over 35 years in a legal system that does not appear to have given him a fair shake. In spite of that, he has maintained a very uplifted view of life, helped fellow inmates with health and legal issues, and raised money for his church. He co-founded the first men's group in a California prison, and he has maintained a zero-violence record while in some of the most dangerous prisons in California, putting him in the top 1% of inmates. He recently developed cardiomyopathy and is at high-risk for COVID-19.

We 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 the Ananda spiritual community.** Would you please give him a chance to be considered by the parole board for release? Thank you for your kind consideration. We can be reached via the below contact information if you need to do so for any reason.

Sincerely,

Cecilia and Vivek Sharma

Assisi, Italy, 13 August 2020 -Photo of us at Spoleto Maximum Security Prison with Director, Supervisory Magistrate and Deputy Director



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

August 3, 2020

To: Governor Gavin Newsom  
Cc: CCI Maldonado, CDCR

My name is Marilyn Mills. I know of Joe Hunt and his circumstances through my associations with eight ministers of Ananda Church whom I respect. They have visited Mr. Hunt in prison over many years and have seen first hand that Mr. Hunt embodies the spiritual teachings and values of Ananda Church. Our teachings emphasize personal responsibility to live a life of service and good will to all through meditation, self-honesty and love for a higher power than ourselves. Ananda Church is recognized globally for these values. On November 17, 2017, Ananda's Spiritual Directors, Jyotish and Devi Novak accepted the Global Ambassador Peace Award from the Institute of Social Development at the United Nations Church Center in New York City.

I also know of Mr. Hunt through writings he has shared with Ananda members and through his sister and brother-in-law. I remember writing to his sister after reading an email from Mr. Hunt about his reflections on a set back in his parole process. He wrote about accepting what is, not in resignation, not in defeat, not in bitterness, but rather in strength and love for God so his inner peace would not waiver; he could constructively regroup and decide on his next steps. I told his sister I was grateful to receive that inspiring message for my own life. I am positive that Mr. Hunt will have much to offer to all of Ananda and the world in general if his sentence is commuted and he is able to share his wisdom freely.

Upon release from prison, I know Mr. Hunt will receive the love, acceptance, and support of many Ananda members. I can say this with certainty because of my own experiences living as a part of the Mountain View spiritual community for the past almost nine years now. Also, I watched our community embrace the daughter of one of our members when she was released from prison and came to live with us in Mountain View for a time until she regained her footing, found employment, and moved out on her own.

Thank you for reading my comments.

Sincerely,

Marilyn Mills

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

August 7, 2020

To: Governor Gavin Newsom

cc: CCI Maldonado, CDCR

Nocera Umbra, 09 August 2020

Attention Governor Newsom,

My name is Chiara Azzali and I live at the Ananda Assisi community in Italy. I work as a therapist/psychologist specializing in situations of traumatic origin through "Somatic Experiencing" and craniosacral technique.

I heard about Joe Hunt at a community meeting where our spiritual directors and other ministers shared his story and related testimonies. I immediately felt admiration for this person, for his inner strength and his kindness. Joe not only found support and light for himself in the spiritual path, but he also began to share his understanding and to serve by helping others. This, in my opinion, is an indication of the changes he has undergone while incarcerated.

I believe that a person like Joe Hunt is a positive example for many who face major challenges in their lives, that no matter how difficult our circumstances it is always possible to find God; it is always possible to live by expressing the best part of ourselves; it is always possible to choose and we can learn to choose for Good. I hope with all my heart that after living 35 years in prison, you will feel to free him to live a new reality.

I was deeply moved to hear that in the Ananda Village community in California, they are ready to welcome him and are preparing a home for him and his family, Receiving the support of an entire community, with whom he shares the principles of living simply and with high ideals, will help in a transition as delicate as getting out of prison after so many years. I believe it can make a huge positive difference for him.

For any question or clarification regarding this letter you can contact me at + [redacted] or at [redacted], or find me at \ [redacted], [redacted] (PG) Italy.

Thank you for your attention.

Cordial greetings,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'Chiara Azzali', is written over a grey rectangular redaction box.

Chiara Azzali

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 Sirs:

My name is Chikako Fujita. I am a certified yoga teacher, working full time at Ananda Sangha in New Delhi, India.

Since childhood, I wanted to dedicate my life to help others who are in need. After earning Master's degree at Yale, I worked in the field of Corporate Social Responsibility, poverty alleviation, and international development for over a decade, trying my best to contribute to the betterment of many lives. When I found Ananda and its spiritual teaching, I realized what our society needs is not only economic and social development, but more importantly, the inner fulfilment within each individual.

I have never met Joe Hunt in person, but heard a lot about him and his life from Ananda ministers and teachers. I trust their words and judgments as they have dedicated their lives to God and have been living spiritual lives with sincerity and devotion for many decades. Later I read his writings and the testimony of others, including about the raising of over \$1 million for the construction of a new temple in Ananda Village in Nevada City, California, and was stuck in awe.

It is still beyond imagination for me how Joe has been able to stay undaunted and upright in the prison environment for so many years. It is truly inspiring that he trained himself to write legal appeals and helped over a dozen inmates get released. His life taught me the importance of courage and humility – Never giving in to the circumstances, never stop learning new things, and always, selflessly helping others.

He has spent 35 years in prison. He has helped many lives; probably far more than an average person would do in a lifetime. His health is failing. His release would not be a threat to society. On the contrary, when released, Joe will bring hope to many people with his positive attitude and kindness, and be a valuable addition to society as a shining example of how one can rise above the circumstances. Such an example is greatly needed especially now when many are going through very difficult times.

I earnestly hope the commutation of his sentence will be granted and Joe will be released from prison soon.

Thank you for taking time to read my letter. Should you have any questions regarding my letter, I can be reached at [REDACTED].

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]  
Chikako Fujita



**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 Chris Gorski and I have lived in a spiritual community called Ananda which is in Portland, Oregon for almost 10 years now. I believe that living a life of integrity and service to God and my fellow man is important. It is something that I have made my life's work as a counselor and social worker. I have worked in various types of human service agencies serving humanity over the past 30 years.

I learned of Joe Hunt through my association with Ananda. His situation and the many inspiring things he has done for his fellow man while in prison over the last 35 years has prompted me to write this letter. I feel that he has served his debt to society and can continue to do more good outside of prison than within its confines.

Joe Hunt's exemplary prison behavior record and assistance to other inmates in various ways through the men's groups and legal help speaks volumes. I was a counselor in a juvenile detention facility for years and could only wish that we had people like Joe Hunt who does what he can to serve and help his fellow man who are serving time.

If Joe is released from incarceration, he will continue to be a positive asset to society and his fellow man which our outside world desperately needs, especially now with all of the uncertainty and fear that everyone is experiencing. He would receive transitional assistance and be living at Ananda Village with his sister so he could receive all of the various types of support that he will need after 35 years of incarceration.

I respectfully request that his sentence be commuted based on an exemplary 35 years of service and good behavior to his fellow man.

If you would like to contact me feel free at [REDACTED] or [REDACTED]

Sincerely and respectfully,

[REDACTED]

Chris Gorski



Assisi, Italy - August 9th 2020

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

To: Governor Gavin Newsom  
Cc: CCI Maldonado, CDCR

Dear Sirs,

My name is Clara Linda Poselli, I am Italian and I live in an Ananda Community in Italy, Assisi, since 1996, where I am a minister and a Spiritual Teacher.

I am writing this letter to ask for Joe Hunt's Commutation.

I am convinced that prison should be a place where people can be re-educated, where they can learn dignity and respect for others and for themselves, perhaps for the first time in their lives, a place where they can learn about hope, not just punishment and despair.

And I also believe that when a prisoner demonstrates that he has taken advantage of captivity to express the noblest side of his nature, then this prisoner should be rewarded and be able to become, in front of other prisoners, the living testimony that to improve oneself is possible and that, when this happens, life rewards us.

I don't know Joe Hunt personally, but from the many testimonies I've read about him, some of them very touching, it seems that Hunt has learned this lesson so deeply that he has earned the respect and admiration of everyone who has known him, even that of other violent and aggressive inmates.

This is why I am asking for his Commutation.

I Thank you for your kind attention.

Sincerely,  
Clara Linda Poselli



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

Assisi (Italy) August 2, 2020

To: Governor Gavin Newsom  
Cc: CCl Maldonado, CDCR

Dear Sirs,

My name is Claudio Gregorelli, I'm Italian and live in a spiritual community called Ananda, near Assisi, region of Umbria (Italy), where I've been serving as a teacher and coordinator of guest programs offered at our spiritual retreat for more than 30 years.

I got acquainted with Joe Hunt case a few year back, when I heard that, even though this man was in jail in California, he was able to accomplish good things both in creative arts and finances and has been so generous as to donate a large amount of money for the construction of an Ananda Temple in California.

I do not know him personally, but when I read his story, I immediately felt he is a man of genuine and compassionate character and he has had the misfortune to be condemned without possibility of parole.

I wanted then to help him to find the justice he deserved, so much so that two years ago I signed a petition for him to be freed from prison and I've continued to support him for this to happen.

His release will not only be positive for him, but for society in general, since as a free man he could offer his services and share his gifts with many more people.

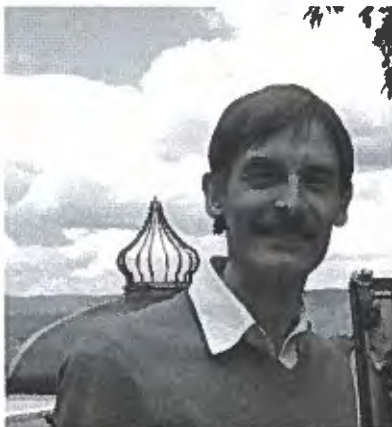
I believe he is an intelligent man and devoted to a spiritual life and he will be accepted easily in any community he would like to live without creating any difficulties.

Dear Governor, please give him the chance to be let out of jail and I am sure that his charitable nature combined with his experience of many years in prison will give support and inspiration to many who are in difficulty, and help them to choose a life based on compassion, generosity, and forgiveness. I've seen these attitudes in his life in prison and this is the reason why my heart leads me to request his release.

May you be blessed in taking action in Joe Hunt's case.

Respectfully,

Claudio Gregorelli



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

**To: Governor Gavin Newsom**

**Cc: CC1 Maldonado, CDCR**

Dear Governor Gavin Newsom,

My name is Cora and I add my letter to all the ones that are heartily asking you to commute Joe Hunt's sentence and allow a parole board to consider him for release from prison.

I am a school teacher and a trainer teacher, and I have devoted my life to God and my church. I feel Joe as a spiritual brother and an example in my life.

Over 35 years in different prison He has been focusing in developing his spiritual life and serve others.

He wrote that the passage He most frequently recite to himself is this one:

"He who works for Me (God) alone;  
Who makes Me his goal:  
Who lovingly surrenders himself to Me;  
Who is non-attached to My delusive cosmic dream-worlds:  
Who bears ill-will towards none, beholding Me in all:  
He enters my being"

He is constantly practising prayers for guidance and attunement and He brings calmness, love, and light in an environment that it is really hard for me to imagine.  
I am sincerely honoured to write and support His cause.

Thinking of Him give myself strength and faith in God's power and Love, and the possibility to be a divine channel, as Joe on this earth.

I hope He can soon share His service and heart freely with all and His church!

Thank you for your kind attention, consideration and your service!

I can be reached via the below contact information if you need to do so for any reason.

Sincerely,

Cora Chiavedale

[Redacted signature]



Date: August 13th 2020

Phone Number: [Redacted]

Email Address: [Redacted]

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

July 29, 2020

To: Governor Gavin Newsom  
cc: CC1 Maldonado, CDCR

From: Joseph Begley  
[REDACTED]

Dear Gavin,

Hi—I'm Bob Begley's son; you knew him as S.F. Hotel Council Director when you were mayor there. You did become governor, as predicted! Dad passed on in 2011, you probably know.

I'm writing my first letter to you now because of Joe Hunt. I know him through good friends: his sister and her husband, members of our church since about 10 years ago where I was a minister.

Regarding Joe, I sincerely believe his "life without parole" sentence should be commuted. You'll no doubt hear from others of his friends and supporters; all I can say is that the good things you hear about him are true. I've witnessed so many examples of his selfless generosity and positivity, that I simply can't imagine why he should remain in prison any longer. Society needs more people with saintly character like his. That's the sincere truth from my heart.

There is such a supporting community for him of friends and well-wishers who have been hoping for the day when they'll see him released, that he, and we, will thrive.

Thank you so much for hearing me out. I truly hope you'll have it in your heart to release Joe.

Blessings,  
[REDACTED]

Joseph Begley



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

To the honorable Governor of California: Gavin Newsom, CC1 Maldonado, CDCR

August 6 2020

Dear Sir:

My name is Jan Lotichius. I was born in Amsterdam, but for the past 30 years I have lived in Italy, where I serve as vice-president of Ananda Sangha Europa, an organization dedicated to sharing teachings of Self realization in body, mind and soul. We teach meditation, yoga and integrated spirituality and have been able, over the past decades, to serve people in all walks of life, professionally, socially, religiously.

I am also the author of an Italian novel entitled *Locus Iste*.

I have followed Joe Hunt's work and service from prison mainly through my friends Jyotish and Devi Novak, who are presidents of the Ananda Sangha worldwide community of which I too am a part. These two friends and a few others who speak about Joe Hunt, I have known for a lifetime and my trust in them is unconditional.

I have also followed Joe Hunt's updates on the Internet.

I am deeply grateful for what he has been able to do for other people, in and outside prison, and for the support he has given, both spiritual and financial, to Ananda worldwide, of which we are both a part.

In July 2019 I was able to come to California to celebrate Ananda's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary and the dedication of a new "Temple of Light." These celebrations were attended by thousands of people and they rank among the most precious and joyful experiences in my life. Only recently did I learn about Joe Hunt's substantial fundraising efforts, contributing to the building of this beautiful new temple.

We believe that no man can be defined by his errors, which are an inevitable part of human growth; that virtue helps man to emancipate his spirit, and that spiritually enlightened people are what society at large needs the most.

I deeply feel that this is what Joe Hunt has been trying to accomplish over the past decades in prison, through his service and his meditations, and I earnestly plea with you to commute his sentence and to return him to the society which he is trying to serve.

It will surely be an act of great compassion, towards Joe Hunt, his loved ones and all the people he has served, many of whom might not even know him.

With kind regards,



Jan Lotichius



**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 Diana Taylor. I have taught meditation and spirituality for 20 years in California and India as an ordained minister of Ananda Church of Self-Realization, headquartered in Nevada City. My husband and I currently direct the Ananda meditation center in Delhi, India.

I support Joe Hunt's petition for release from prison. I have not met Joe personally, but I am familiar with his case, and I have followed his progress. I have heard about Joe Hunt's situation from Donald Walters, John and Phyllis Novak, David Praver, Asha Nayaswami, and many other long-time teachers of mine. I trust their judge of character and they speak very highly of Joe.

I have read Joe's letters, and understand how he lifted his own state of being by meditation, and serving others; and also how he is helping others to lift themselves.

In such a difficult environment to exude a positive presence, he must be a very positive person.

Joe has many friends who will help him if his sentence is commuted. Personally, I would be willing to contribute to his financial security, if he is released. I feel he would be a great asset to society.

If you have any questions, please contact me: (b) (6).

Thank you for considering the release of Joe Hunt.

Sincerely,

(b) (6)

Diana Taylor



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

Deborah K. Fletcher



August 1, 2020

To: Governor Gavin Newsom

Cc: CC1 Maldonado, CDCR

Dear Sirs,

My name is Deborah Fletcher. I am a web designer for and friend to the worldwide spiritual community called Ananda. I live just outside the border of Ananda Village in Nevada City, California, and interact with the community every day. I am part of the Ananda family that gives and serves humanitarian needs around the world. Just the other day, July 31<sup>st</sup>, I posted the following on Facebook. I share it as a way of expressing what Ananda means to me and to countless other individuals. Joe Hunt is a loved and cherished member of our community also serving others, even though he has been incarcerated for 36 years.

I was just taking a look at the [ananda.org](http://ananda.org) landing page. Even though I help maintain a small portion of it, I had no idea about the new look and feel of it until jumping out there to make sure a certain feature was happening.

Have you ever felt joy about something that you had nothing to do with? Maybe you are a parent whose teenage child is acting in a way that is letting you know somewhere along the way they heard you, and it made you smile in silence. Maybe you and a friend are going through your own individual hard times, and in going through the motions of the friendship, something happens, that you both realize in that moment, even if what happened was an epic fail, you were both giving at a depth of where true love exists. You knew it as silent grace.

What does expressing these experiences have to do with [Ananda.org](http://Ananda.org)'s new landing page? Ananda is my friend and in some ways my child. With all that is going on, there is a new depth of love flowing freely from countless souls here, wanting all of us to feel Divine Love and Friendship.

I hope you come see what I see, and feel what I feel. There is friendship here.

Love and joy 🍷😊

[Debbie Fletcher](#)

I moved from Texas to be close to Ananda Village a little over two years ago because of their/our dedication to a belief, born from experience that we can live in joy under any circumstance. Joe Hunt's story is an interesting one that personifies this very belief under one of the most difficult of circumstances for an unbelievably long time. He not only lives in joy, he shares the experiences of joy with others.

Though the only way I know Joe Hunt, at this time, is through my Ananda family,  
I trust their stories about his life, to be true.

Thank you for reading this letter. Through the faith in my fellow Ananda gurubhais, I fully  
support Joe Hunt's commutation. Please feel free to reach out to me anytime.

*Sincerely,*

Debbie Fletcher

Work  
Home  
Mobile



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



**To Governor Gavin Newsom**

cc: CC1 Maldonado, CDCR

Dear Sirs,

My husband, two sons and I have been members of the Ananda Church of Self-Realization in Bothell, WA for over 11 years. We value purposeful living, spiritual and emotional growth and appreciate dedication to such in others. We have raised our two sons with such values. We have learned about Joe Hunt's life and his dedication to his spiritual growth and his desire to help and inspire others. We have read about his journey with Ananda and his dedication to being a channel of good. We personally know several ministers within our church who know Joe whose judgement we trust without reservation. We understand that he reached out for ministry decades ago and for this we are inspired.

We don't take lightly such a task of putting our name toward a cause. We are writing to wholeheartedly request that you commute the sentence of Joe Hunt. As we write this letter we realize that you receive requests regularly for commutation of sentences for many inmates. To us, learning and understanding the case of Joe Hunt, as well as his character and positive influence he has made both in the prison system and within our greater community within the Ananda Church of Self-Realization, we strongly encourage you to commute his sentence.

It can be said that Joe Hunt has worked and developed himself on his own accord and will continue to enhance the world around him as shown by the way he has made a positive impact on other inmates and others in his life. It is our hope that you will see the positive changes and ongoing work Joe has done and realize that commuting his sentence makes good sense. We further seek to have this man be able to share the rest of his life with his family and friends he dearly loves. We all know that choices we make aren't always the best choices when we are young. He has paid dearly for the past 35 years for his mistake. His commutation of sentence will certainly be appreciated and in our view, well-founded.

Thank you for your consideration of this important matter.

Sincerely,

A rectangular area of the document has been redacted with a solid grey box, likely covering a signature.

Denise DePasquale Huang

A small rectangular area of the document has been redacted with a solid grey box.

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

August 11, 2020

To: Governor Gavin Newsom  
Cc: CCI Maldonado, CDCR

Dear Governor Newsom:

My name is Dennis Kirsch, and I am writing to you at this time to encourage you to consider granting a commutation of sentence to Joe Hunt. I am a retired Boeing software engineer and reside in Seattle, WA. As a member of the Ananda Church, I have practiced Ananda's spiritual teachings, which are centered in meditation, for ten years.

I first heard about Joe Hunt some years ago from the world leaders of Ananda, Jyotish and Devi Novak, who have visited Joe in prison many times and consider him to be a dear friend. Jyotish and Devi have repeatedly told inspiring stories of selfless giving by Joe to his fellow prisoners. This giving includes spiritual guidance, as well as legal assistance. Since I was first told about Joe Hunt by our spiritual directors, I have heard similar stories of his generosity and kindness from other church ministers who know him personally. They have described his constant efforts to improve himself, through both self-directed study and spiritual practice, and of how he has used his learning to help not only himself, but many others.

It is clear to me that Joe Hunt has grown very much during his 35 years of incarceration. He has dealt with his situation courageously, with determination, and with kindness and love toward others. The lives of many people have been changed for the better because they came into contact with Joe.

I respectfully ask you to give this man a chance to make his case for freedom. I am certain that society would not be endangered in any way if Joe were let out of prison. On the contrary, I believe that our lives would be enriched by his presence among us.

If you have questions or wish to contact me for any reason, you may do so at [REDACTED], or by phone at ([REDACTED]). Thank you for reading my letter.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

Dennis R. Kirsch



Assisi, Italy - August 9th 2020

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

Dear Governor Gavin Newsom cc: CC1 Maldonado, CDCR

I am Tiziano Tasselli, living in the community of Ananda Assisi in Italy since 2014. I currently serve as President of the Ananda Assisi Community APS and the Ananda Bio Farm.

I do not know Joe Hunt personally, but through other members of the community I learned about his story which touched me deeply and inspired me to write this letter. Even though we do not know each other, we share the same spiritual path. I feel "Jairam" (his spiritual name) is my spiritual brother, as both of us are disciples of the great Indian Master Paramhansa Yogananda, author of the best-selling "Autobiography of a Yogi".

From many friends that I trust, I have heard that Joe Hunt has done good things for so many people in prison. Given his good conduct all these years, the greatest gift he can receive would be his freedom, so he can continue his good work free of restraints.

Since 2015, I have been to Ananda Village in California three times. I can testify that it would be the perfect place for Joe to live for the rest of his life. I feel from the bottom of my heart, that all members of the community would welcome him with joy and enthusiasm. I would be very happy to meet him as soon as there is a chance for me to return to America.

From this land where I reside, touched by St. Francis, I pray to God and all the Saints that they may bless your hand, and that God's Mercy may do the rest to allow Joe Hunt, through your signature, to breathe life outside of his cell. We his spiritual family will wait for him with open hearts ready to give him all the love he deserves.

I thank God if this important decision will be made by those who have the power to decide Joe's freedom.

Thank you, Governor, for your kind attention to this letter.

Best regards

Tiziano Tasselli (Deodan)



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

Alex and Edith Forrester



July 28, 2020

To: Governor Gavin Newsom

Cc: CCI Maldonado, CDCR

Our names are Alex and Edith Forrester. We are members of Ananda Village in Nevada City, CA., a 50-year old spiritual community, of about 200 people dedicated to simple living and high thinking. The village was recently recognized as a model community by the Nevada County Board of Supervisors during the recent Master Plan process. We own property adjacent to Ananda Village.

We first heard about Joe Hunt from the founder of Ananda Worldwide, Donald Walters, now deceased, about 15 years or so ago. Mr. Walters often spoke about Joe Hunt as a role model of the principles on which Ananda is founded: right action, service, and meditation. We have also spoken directly with several ministers who have visited Joe in prison and were inspired by his presence, perseverance and positive attitude in the face of many varied challenges.

Joe's story has often reminded us to be grateful for the freedoms with which we are blessed. We feel it would be beneficial for Joe, his relatives, his spiritual family at Ananda, and society to release him from prison. He has served many decades in prison and spent much time assisting other inmates, Ananda Village financially, and, we have heard, been a model inmate himself. As taxpayers, we would appreciate someone such as Joe, who has served 35 years in prison with a clean record and abundant proof of his sincere consideration of others to be released and allowed to serve in the world.

Joe would always have a home at Ananda Village, and has family living here. We would be happy to have him as a neighbor and offer spiritual support. We feel he would be a great

benefit to society. He could not only support himself, but generously share what he earns as well!

Feel free to contact us if you have any questions at [REDACTED]

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]  
Alex Forrester III

[REDACTED]  
Edith Forrester



Alex and Edith Forrester with son, daughter-in-law, and grandchildren



# Ananda

CHURCH OF SELF-REALIZATION of Nevada County

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

July 30, 2020

To: Governor Gavin Newsom

Cc: CC1 Maldonado, CDCR

Dear Sirs:

My name is Melody Veenhof. I am a minister and teacher at Ananda Village, a spiritual community based on the teachings of yoga and meditation. I have lived and worked here for 22 years. One of the guiding principles of Ananda is that people are more important than things. In other words, a person's highest potential and growth toward that potential is considered more important than any mistakes they have made. It is because of this that I am so inspired by Joe Hunt's life as he epitomizes what it is to develop the best parts of oneself.

Even though I have not personally met Joe Hunt, his story and his life has inspired me in profound ways. Many of us live in so-called "freedom," but do not accomplish even a fraction of what Joe Hunt has while behind bars. Co-founding of the first men's group in a California prison is just one example. He has stood as a spiritual light in the most difficult conditions of prison life—bringing hope, healing, and true change in many prisoners lives—one's that others had long ago given up on.

Joe Hunt deserves freedom from incarceration. His life in prison has been a shining example of truth, self-honesty, selfless service to others, compassion, kindness, and honor. Should he be released, there is absolutely no doubt in my heart or mind that would be nothing but an asset to society.

I welcome any further correspondence, should anyone have any questions or concerns regarding my letter. I can be reached at ( ) or .

Thank you for considering this.

Kind Regards,

Melody Veenhof



August 2, 2020

To: Governor Gavin Newsom  
Cc: CC1 Maldonado, CDRC

Dear Sirs,

My name is David Warner. I have taught meditation and spiritual living for over 40 years as part of Ananda Sangha. I have been an ordained minister since 1987.

An essential part of my lifelong teaching and practice has been the potential for every person to change, to grow, and to reach their highest potential. Not everyone makes that choice, but I have seen many, many people make seemingly miraculous changes in their lives.

Joe Hunt is one such person. I have never met him personally, but I know his family and have several close friends who visit him. Some of these are people that I have known for over 40 years, and hold in the highest regard. Without exception, they know Joe Hunt as a bright light in the very negative environment of prison. I understand that his guards, fellow prisoners, prison chaplains, counselors, and others view him similarly.

His is one of the most inspiring stories of redemption that I have ever heard, and I have heard many. It is one that deserves the compassion and forgiveness of our society, and of those who represent us. I appreciate the great responsibility that you have on our behalf. I ask you to grant Joe Hunt his freedom at this time.

The timing is especially important. With his health and heart problems, and with the dangers of COVID-19 on prisoners, he deserves is compassionate release at this time.

We would like nothing more than to welcome Joe Hunt into our community. He would be a great asset wherever he goes, but our entire community would welcome him with open arms.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me: [REDACTED].

Thank you for your kind consideration of the compassionate release of Joe Hunt.

Warm Regards,  
David Warner



**This is regarding Joe Hunt, D-61863, Governor's Commutation Application.**

Dhruv Gupta

A [REDACTED],  
I [REDACTED]  
I [REDACTED]



August 10, 2020

To: Governor Gavin Newsom  
Cc: CC1 Maldonado, CDCR

My name is Dhruv Gupta. I'm a businessman in Noida, near Delhi, I own my own business, I'm a father and husband, and a member of Ananda Sangha in India. I learned about Joe Hunt from my Ananda friends Diana and Michael Taylor. They have been following Joe's case for some time now, and they feel it's not possible to be certain Joe is guilty.

Joe has already spent 35 years of his life in prison, he came in when 24 years old. Now he is a 60 year old with heart and health difficulties.

I have also read about Joe Hunt's case, and I was inspired with the accounts of how he has helped other inmates personally and with legal advice. Prison staff and counsellors have spoken highly of his calm and positive influence on those around him. For most of his time in prison he has kept up a daily practice of meditation that has given him this calmness. I practice the same type of meditation and can attest to its efficacy.

From what my friends have told me and what I have read of Joe's life, I am convinced that he has transformed himself and deserves to be released. He would be a positive force for good in society.

If I can be of further help, please contact me: [REDACTED]

Thank you for your consideration of Joe's freedom.  
Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

Dhruv Gupta

**Subject:** re. Joe Hunt, D-61863, Governor's Commutation Application.

August, 10 2020

Highly esteemed Governor Gavin Newsom

my name is Nicola Fiorino and I am a University professor at "N. Piccinni" Conservatory of Music in Bari, Italy.

The story of human transformation and redemption of Mr. Joe Hunt is known to me since a couple of years through the accounts and writings of some very dear friends of mine and I've been very touched and driven to deep reflections from the very first moment by it, feeling full of hopes for the final grace and liberation of this noble soul.

In any society the aim of Justice should be the enhancement of righteousness and peace at all levels among individuals and groups and the care for the momentarily less fortunate ones. Some of our fellow beings might be driven into errors and crimes sometimes intentionally or sometimes unintentionally and some of them have to go to jail to be, in the best cases, re-educated to due ethical behaviors which any society needs in order to flourish and to progress.

Some of our misfortunate fellow being succeed to change for the better in the process of social rehabilitation, bringing the social structure to a victory in its purpose.

Some of them become even a shining example for others around them and this is, according to all testimonies at hand, the blissful case of Mr. Joe Hunt, who entered jail under very uncertain circumstances and kept his faith in God and justice for decades until today making him very well loved by thousands, near and far, who came to know about his extraordinary story.

In the name of all the Good that civil society is pursuing I sincerely pray and I sincerely plead that Mr. Joe Hunt can walk out of prison and that he can bring his noble and faithful example to the society to new inspirations and new redeeming acts.

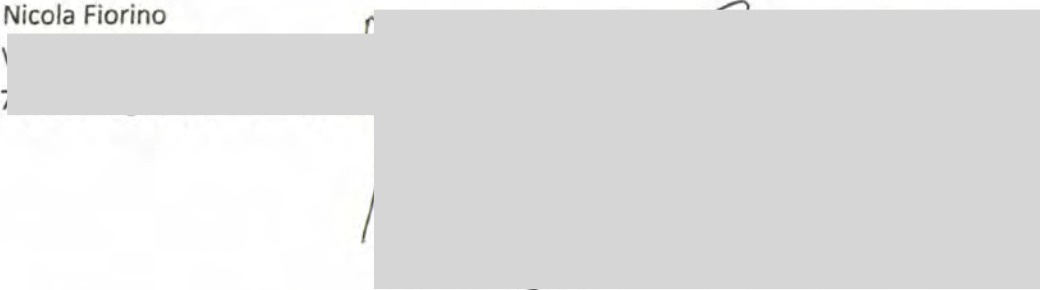
I have been deeply moved by the accounts that some fellow prisoners have written about Mr. Joe Hunt and I am persuaded that only a man who has fully embraced a divine life can manifest such changes and such miracles with his testimony in a lifetime.

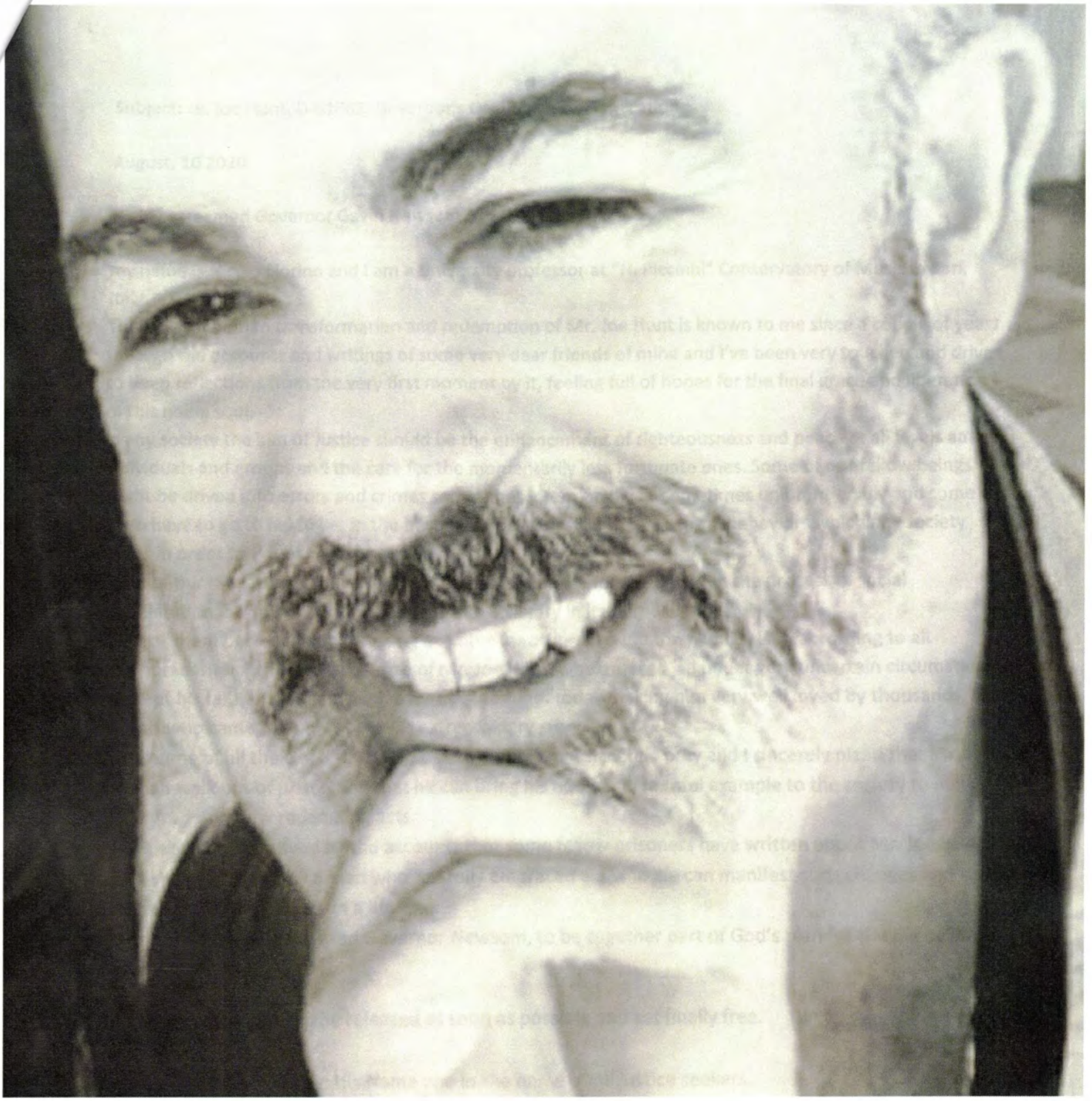
I write to you, highly esteemed Governor Newsom, to be together part of God's plan for the life of Mr. Joe Hunt.

I plead hereby that he can be released as soon as possible and set finally free.

God bless you and thanks in His Name and in the name of all justice seekers.

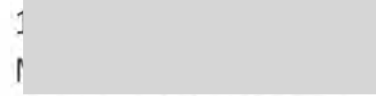
Yours faithfully,  
Nicola Fiorino





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

Rina B McCord



August 2, 2020

To Governor Gavin Newsom  
Cc: CCI Maldonado, CDCR

Dear Sirs:

My name is Rina McCord. I am a minister and a yoga and meditation teacher at a spiritual community called Ananda Village, in the Sierra foothills. I have lived in this community for 30 years and taught many people throughout the world, yoga and meditation at our guest retreat.

Even though I have not met Joe Hunt in person, I hold him in high regard, due to his interactions with our community and with good friends of mine who visit him often in prison.

Many of our community leaders and ministers have shared with me about Joe's dedication to the practice of meditation and his example and positive effect on the members in the prison community. I am so touched by the letters of gratitude that people wrote to him, regarding his help to them.

Joe Hunt has been very generous in helping our community build the Temple of Light, which serves our worldwide work. Along with his sister and brother-in-law, they were able to raise over \$2 million through investments. Because of their help, our community was able to complete the temple.

I believe that Joe will be worthy of being released, and will be a great addition to our local society, as well as to the larger society of which we are a part. At Ananda we will welcome him with open arms as a part of our spiritual family. He has been so supportive of our spiritual work, and was willing to do what he can to help us.

Thank you for reading my letter in support of Joe Hunt. I wish you all to remain well during these challenging times.

Should you wish to contact me, I can be reached at the phone number provided below.

Sincerely,

( [REDACTED] )

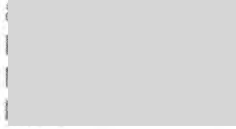
Rina B. McCord

[REDACTED]



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

Dolly Govil



August 12, 2020

To: Governor Gavin Newsom  
cc: CC1 Maldonado, CDCR



My name is Dolly Govil. I am a finance professional working as a Senior General Manager for an MNC, I am also a wife and mother, and I teach classes in meditation and spirituality for Ananda Sangha Delhi.

I'm writing in support of Joe Hunt. I haven't met him in person, but I have heard inspiring stories about him. I was very impressed with reading how he went out of his way to help many other inmates, giving them counsel and support through his extensive study of the law. He helped a number of them get acquitted, release from prison, or reduced sentences. He has also done a tremendous amount in the larger world, to support the spread of meditation and spiritual teachings through helping build teaching centers.

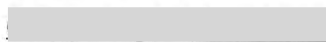
I've taught meditation to many different kinds of people and have seen how it can change lives for the better. Joe meditates daily and is an excellent example of this kind of transformation. How he can live under difficult circumstances but still be positively helping others all the time!

John and Phyllis Novak, and Michael and Diana Taylor, have followed Joe's life for many years. They've spoken very highly of him. I respect the four of them as my teachers, and I have confidence in their assessment of Joe Hunt.

Also, from the standpoint of compassion, I hope that Joe can be released from prison. I hear that he is now having health problems, he's 60 years old, and has been in prison for 35 years, his entire adult life.

I support Joe Hunt's petition for release from prison.

I can be reached if you need to contact me:



Thank you for your time and understanding.

Sincerely,



Dolly Govil

Paudex, August 10, 2020

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

Dear Governor Gavin Newsom cc: CC1 Maldonado, CDCR

Mr. Gavin Newsom  
Governor of California,  
1303 10th St Suite 1173,  
Sacramento,  
CA 95814,  
United States

Dear Governor Newsom,

Hope this letter finds you safe and well.

The world is facing an unpreceded health crisis due to COVID-19. I am deeply sorry for the loss of so many American lives and pray for everyone affected.

Today, I am writing to you regarding the case of Mr. Joseph Hunt which is heart-breaking. 36 years in prison for a crime he did not commit. During his incarceration he has led an exemplary and heroic life helping other inmates mentally and spiritually.

I am glad to hear that the government of California, which has the power to release him, is examining several cases of people in prison who are older and who could be released due to the pandemic.

I have read several testimonies in praise of Mr. Hunt. It was heart warming and inspiring to read these stories of kindness, altruism and resilience.

Dear Governor, you have children of your own. As a father, you would do anything in your power to protect and defend your children. I ask you to see Mr. Hunt as one of your closest friend or a family member, who has been unjustly put in prison. Now you have the power to correct the wrong which was done in the past.

Mr. Hunt is in a position to be released due to his age, his flawless record of exemplary behavior and on humanitarian grounds.

It is not a coincidence that you have been elected to this position at this particular time in history. Please serve your countrymen with compassion, justice and kindness. Your example will help other elected officials to show compassion in turn.

I trust you will do what is required to release Mr. Hunt so he can be re-joined to his family who have never stopped believing in his innocence and good heart.

In gratitude for your compassionate heart,

Warm regards,  
Valentina Ganesan

[Redacted Signature]

Valentina Ganesan

[Redacted Contact Information]





# Ananda

## CHURCH OF SELF-REALIZATION of Nevada County

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

August 4, 2020

To: Governor Gavin Newsom  
Cc: CCI Maldonado, CDCR

Dear Governor:

Hello. Our names are Sally and John Smallen. We live in the Ananda Community in Nevada City, California where we have resided since 1974. We became ministers in this organization in the 80's. We raised our two children here who have gone on to become well established in their jobs and communities in San Francisco, as a high level technician and San Diego as a Special Needs Teacher and administrator.

We have held positions as General Managers of Ananda Worldwide as well as spiritual leaders in various Ananda communities throughout the United States.

Now we are the managers and directors of one of our spiritual retreats, Ananda Meditation Retreat, which hosts many hundreds of guests from around the world every year.

We became aware of Joe Hunt in the 1990's when several of our ministers and friends went to visit him in prison, getting to know him and eventually helping him to become a spiritual seeker and guide to many others in the prisons where he was located. These ministers are of high caliber people we have experienced through these many years to be highly respected and completely trustworthy. They have explained Joe's circumstances and what he has done to become a valued citizen. We believe it's past time to allow him to become even more of the person he can be through his freedom.

We have no doubt that Joe will be an asset to whatever community he lives in – to help those less fortunate than himself by offering words of encouragement and ways to find peace within themselves through noble teachings. If Joe decides to live at Ananda, he will be an example of someone who has done his best to better himself and those around him and will be a beacon of light in these difficult times (or anytime).

We have experienced hundreds if not thousands of seekers through the years. Some keep with their goals and go on to become better human beings. Some find the tests too difficult to overcome and go back to less successful lives. What Joe has done with his years in prison are to be highly commended. Though extremely difficult trials he has always come out on top. Don't we need more people like this in the United States right now? We firmly believe so.

If you need to contact us for any reason, our email address is [REDACTED]. Phone number: [REDACTED]

Best Regards,

[REDACTED]

Sally and John Smallen



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

To the honorable Governor of California: Gavin Newsom, CC1 Maldonado, CDCR

Dear sir,

My name is Elisa Grion. I was born and raised in Northern Italy (Friuli), where I graduated in social sciences and received my training as a social worker and school teacher.

For 16 years I have served in the public school as a special needs teacher.

My spiritual search has led me to the path of Self-Realization based upon the teachings of Paramhansa Yogananda, a great Master of Yoga who lived for many years in your State of California.

My place of residence is Ananda Assisi, a community based upon Yogananda's teachings of integrated spirituality: the practice of these teachings, in the company of other Ananda members, has enriched my life in every way: professionally, physically, personally, socially and, of course, spiritually.

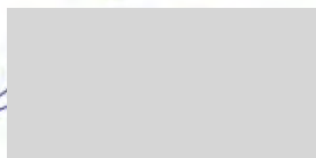
I found out about Joe Hunt through Kirtani Shirley Stickney, the director of our community, whose guidance for me has always been characterized by wisdom and balance in every aspect of life.

I am impressed with and inspired by the way in which Joe Hunt has commuted his time in prison from punishment without hope into service to others and meditation for spiritual attainments. In yoga it says that "environment is stronger than willpower." I am touched by the way in which Joe has been able to use his willpower to create a new environment, inwardly through meditation and outwardly through his service to others.

I wonder why a human being, who has shown such determination in his desire to transcend human error and limitation, should serve more years in prison. Therefore, as his fellow human being, earnestly plea to commute his sentence and release him from prison.



*Assisi, 10 agosto 2020*



*Regarding Mr. Joe hunt, D-61863, Governor's Commutation Application.*

*August 10<sup>th</sup>, 2020*

*To: Governor Newsom*

*Cc: CC1 Maldonado, CDR*

*Dear Governor Newsom,*

*My name Elisa Omassi, and I live in Milano, Italy. I have been connected to the Ananda community near Assisi in Italy for 16 years. I am a yoga teacher and my life is dedicated to serving others, bringing joy and enthusiasm into their lives. And living the ideals that are the foundation of life at Ananda. Maybe not always perfectly, but I continue trying.*

*I have heard about Mr. Joe Hunt from people I trust and respect. Joe's situation could have caused irreparable harm to a person, but he has shown incredible strength and courage and turned this great challenge into the opportunity of a lifetime. He could achieve so much more for himself and others if he were freed from the constraints of prison life.*

*Please be compassionate when you consider Mr. Hunt's next steps. He deserves the opportunity to freely share with as many as possible, what he has learned and gained through his many years of incarceration. What a pity it would be to waste such a valuable resource that this man has become.*

*Trusting to your wisdom and generosity when you come to make this important decision regarding Mr. Hunt's future. I can be reached if necessary at [REDACTED]. Thank you for allowing me to be heard.*

*Best regards,*

*Elisa Omassi*

*[REDACTED]*

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

To: Governor Gavin Newsom

August 2, 2020

Cc: CCI Maldonado, CDCR

Dear Governor:

My name is Elizabeth McConner and I live at [REDACTED]

I had a lifetime career as an educator in New York and Arizona, much of it working with at-risk youth. I have not met Joe Hunt, whom we in this spiritual community of Ananda call Jairam. I am writing because I did know J. Donald Walters, whose teachings guide my understanding and life. Mr. Walters, the founder of Ananda, believed that Jairam was innocent and should be freed. J. Donald Walters is one of the most spiritually evolved humans I have met and I have found his deep insight and beliefs life-changing.

Mr. Hunt has been in prison for 35 years. He has been kind and helpful to other prisoners and his behavior has never been violent. He has used this time to look at his life and done the work involved to understand life and change his consciousness for the better. He undertook a spiritual journey of meditation and prayer which he continues to this day. He has taught meditation to other inmates. His behavior and life are compatible with the ideals of the Ananda Community in which we daily seek to live the highest goals of kindness, unity of all people, reverence and love for God.

I have acquainted myself with penal systems around the world. Clearly there are many ways to view rehabilitation. What I see is that our emphasis on punishment does not bring the change in behavior that we seek. If a person has served many years in prison as Joe Hunt has, and is not a danger to himself and others, as he has shown himself to be, we would all be better served for him to re-enter life in the community. Thus, a reformed person would be able to serve the community and to strengthen his character by dealing with life situations rather than being supported by the taxpayers.

I would be happy to speak with anyone who might have questions for me.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

Elizabeth McConner

[REDACTED]



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

Karhuelshast 76

To Governor Gavin Newsom  
cc: CCI Maldonado, COCR

Dear Sirs,

My name is Ellen van Vulpen. Member of Ananda,  
a worldwide movement. I am a teacher and meditation-  
group leader.

Our principles are be honest, loving and serve others.

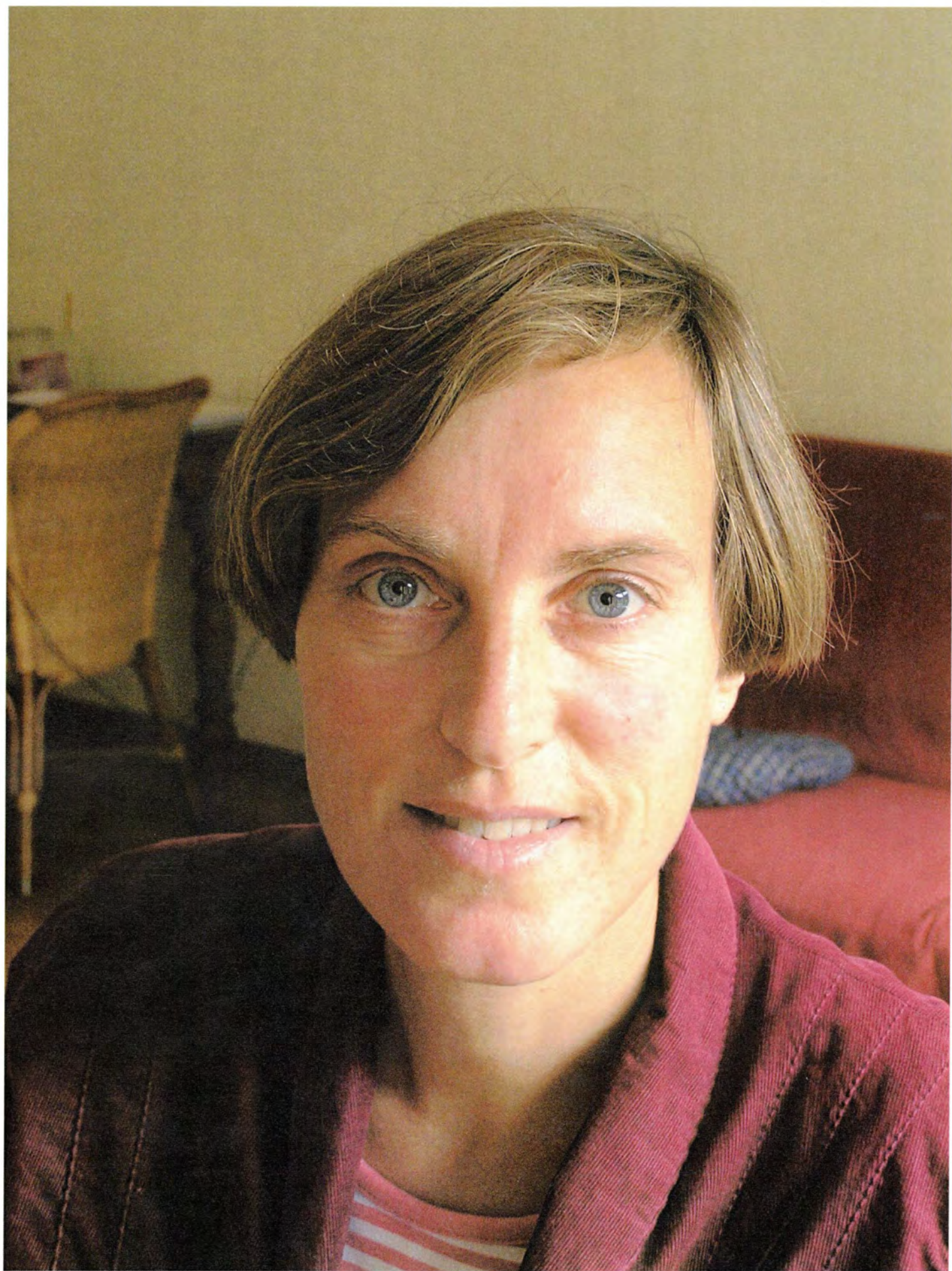
Our goal is to find inner peace in every circumstance.

I never met Joe but heard from him through  
spiritual leaders of Ananda who visit him  
regularly.

I have great respect for him because he has lived  
our teachings for so many years in full. He is  
a great example for others, and is helping others  
with their difficulties.

I think every community of Ananda would welcome  
Joe as an living example of our teachings.

Sincerely



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

August 12, 2020

To: Governor Gavin Newsom

Cc: CC1 Maldonado, CDCR

My name is Eloisa Fuentes. I am a physician based in Menlo Park, California. Our household includes my husband, our 13 year-old daughter and our 11 year-old son.

This letter is in support of Mr. Joe Hunt's Governor's Commutation Application. If as a society we are interested in improving and promoting in-prison rehabilitation, we must recognize individuals within the system who can serve as role models. Individuals who, like Mr. Hunt, have acted to improve their lives and that of others in the worst of circumstances. Mr. Hunt's letters of support by the many people he has known and helped throughout the past decades give witness of him as a person actively doing good for others and inspiring many (including me) to give our bests to society under all circumstances. By granting his petition, the Governor will send a much needed positive message, affirming our society's belief in and commitment to in-prison rehabilitation.

I know Mr. Hunt through the inspiring work he does for Ananda and through his sister. Our family believes in the right for all accused to have a fair hearing. Sadly, reading through the public accounts of Mr. Hunt's experience with the California legal system over the last few decades, it is clear that he has not yet received a fair hearing. His life story and the suffering his family has lived through is heartbreaking.

I request that the Governor give Joe Hunt a chance to be considered for release by the parole board. He has lived an exemplary life behind bars and exemplifies the very reason processes like the Governor's Commutation exist. If you have any questions, please reach out to me via email ( [REDACTED] ).

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

Eloisa Fuentes, MD



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. While I do not know this man personally, I have looked over his case and do not believe justice was done. He has been found guilty and sentenced to a life sentence for the murder of Ron Levin, a known con artist, whose body was never found.

In all likelihood, Ron Levin is probably still alive. There have been numerous witnesses who have claimed to see him in both LA and in Greece after his murder was thought to occur. Furthermore, prior to his disappearance, he had restructured his already-made bail arrangements to release his parents from liability, and asked one witness for information about Brazilian extradition treaties. There was also a purchase made using Levin's [American Express](#) card on the day after the murder was thought to have taken place, of fresh underwear from the Brooks Brothers store in Los Angeles, where Levin was known to shop.

Considering the lack of a body and numerous eye witnesses claiming to have witnessed Levin alive after he was supposed to be dead, Joe Hunt seems to be innocent of this charge. Please give him the chance to be considered for parole board for release. He has already lost over three decades for a crime I don't believe he committed. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A large rectangular area of the document is redacted with a solid grey box. To the left of the box, there is a handwritten mark resembling a stylized 'C' or a bracket. To the right of the box, there is a handwritten checkmark.

Date: 8/12/2020

Printed Name: Erik Krueger

Phone Number: [REDACTED]

Email Address: [REDACTED]

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

August 4, 2020

To: Governor Gavin Newsom

Cc: CC1 Maldonado, CDCR

Dear Sirs,

My name is Erin Vinacco. I live and work at Ananda Village in Nevada City, CA, a spiritual community based on the teachings of yoga and meditation. I work as an elementary school teacher in our Living Wisdom School and have been part of our global Ananda community both here in California and as part of our communities in Portland, OR and in Rhode Island for the past 6 years. I have committed my life to selfless service and am deeply inspired by the example set by Joe Hunt despite his long imprisonment.

I have never actually met Joe Hunt, or Jairam as we call him, but I have come to know him through the ministers and leaders here at Ananda and through his sister Katherine Olivier. They have shared stories of Jairam's incredible spiritual life and his commitment to helping others, both near and far, all while in prison. Jairam has spent approximately 35 years in custody with exemplary conduct and deserves to be free.

When reading his writing in letters that have been shared with the community I am always struck by the genuine joy and positivity I feel in his words. I can't imagine being in his situation - in prison for decades with no end in sight. To keep such a sense of joy and beyond that to work so hard to help others is truly inspiring. If Jairam can have such a powerful positive impact while in prison, I know his positive impact outside of prison could be even greater. Our world today needs more inspiring examples of leadership and compassion as Jairam has shown. Through helping and supporting his fellow prisoners, and through his generous support of Ananda's worldwide work, he is a shining example of the selflessness and consideration for others that we teach in our Living Wisdom schools and that is so much needed in our society.

I believe Joe Hunt, through his spiritual practices, has earned an inner freedom that we all seek. However, I am writing to add my voice to those who firmly believe he also deserves to enjoy an outer freedom and to have his sentence commuted. We at Ananda have received so much inspiration and support from the life and work of Jairam that, should he be released, I have no doubt he will be joyfully welcomed and well supported upon his release by friends and family.

I welcome any additional correspondence, should anyone have any questions regarding my letter. I can be reached at [REDACTED] or [REDACTED].

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Erin Vinacco



August 4, 2020

Governor Newsom

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

I am writing in support of a Commutation Application by Joe Hunt. This kind, gentle soul has spent more than 36 years in prison. I understand that during his many years in prison, he has been an exemplary prisoner who has provided much service to others.

A sentence of life without the possibility of parole is an exceptionally harsh punishment that does not take into consideration the human capacity for change. It also places a heavy burden on society to support every person in prison who cannot work towards release.

Joe has the support of a large spiritual community to assist him in re-entry into the world if he were to be released.

I understand that in addition to many letters of support from Joe's spiritual community, there have also been many letters on his behalf from other prisoners, chaplains, and staff. This speaks well of the man, and indicates how he has touched many lives in a positive way.

It is a very powerful position to be in to commute someone's sentence and allow them to return to the community. I appeal to your sense of fairness and mercy in asking that you give serious consideration to the commutation of Joe Hunt's sentence.

Thank you for your consideration,



Frances Carter, M.S.W.



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 John Kieran. A native of California, I am retired from an engineering career of three decades. After graduating from California State University Sacramento in 1970, I worked as an engineer for California Division of Highways, now Caltrans, and later for the U.S. Air Force. I became registered as a Professional Engineer with California Department of Consumer Affairs, Board of Registration for Professional Engineers and Land Surveyors in 1986.

Ananda Village has been my home since 1973. I came in the early days of Ananda's development. I drew the original maps of the community required by Nevada County as a part of the process to obtain a use permit to legally develop the property. I was married here in 1976. My wife and I have raised a son and daughter here.

Joe Hunt's sister is a friend of mine who lives here at Ananda Village. I learned about his imprisonment and the related circumstances from her and from other friends of mine who have met him and know him. From what I've learned he seems like an excellent human being. The crime for which he's in prison seems very inconsistent from what I know of him. His sentence of life without parole seems categorically unjust.

I urge you to consider commuting his sentence. He's been in prison long enough.

Sincerely,

A rectangular area of the document has been redacted with a solid grey box, obscuring the signature of John Kieran.

John Kieran





August 10, 2020

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

cc: CC1 Maldonado, CDCR

Dear Governor Gavin Newsom,

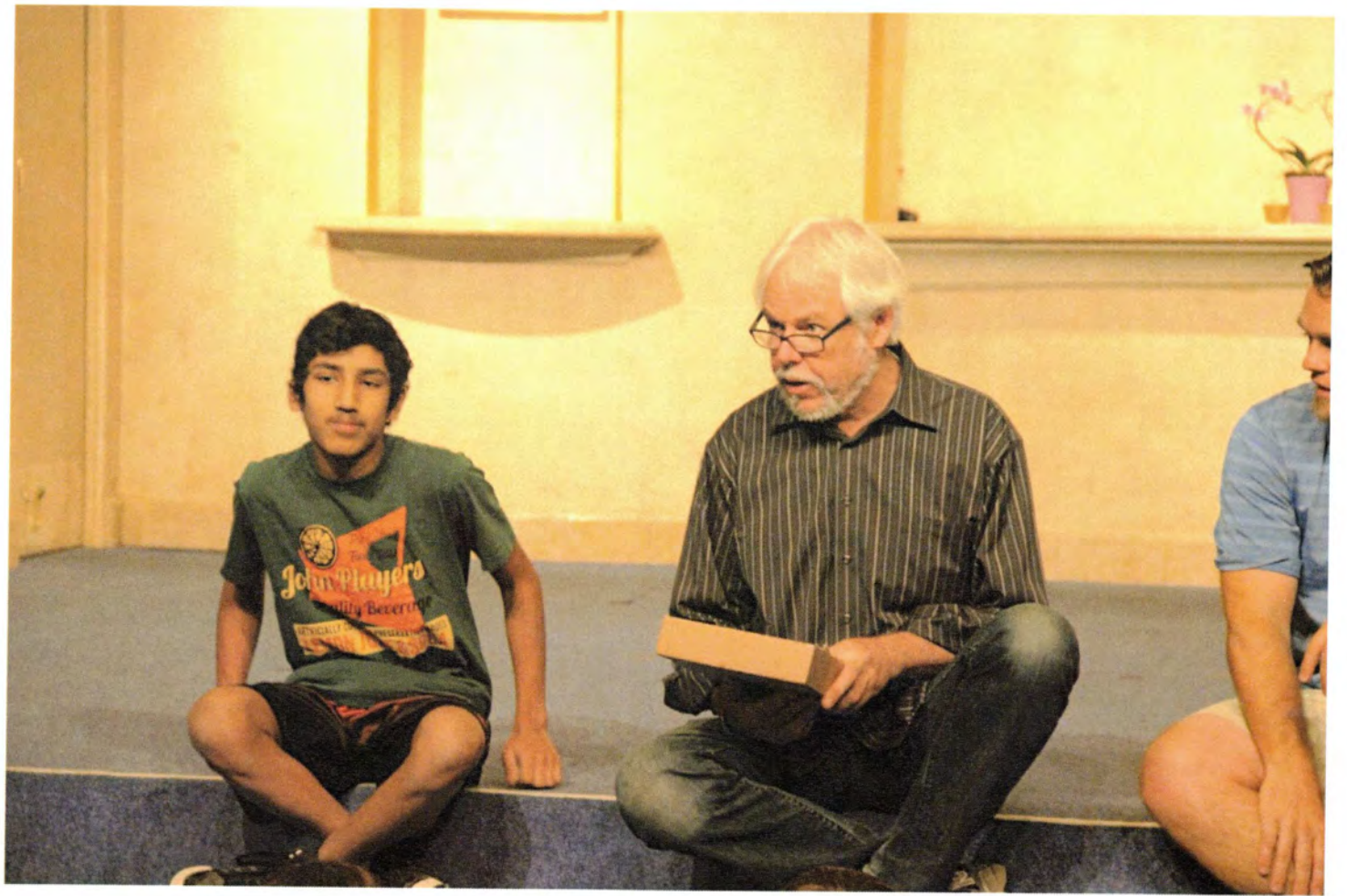
I am a middle school teacher who values fairness, justice, and the need for boundaries! I have been aware of Joe Hunt's case for well over ten years through my brother who visited Joe in prison many times. When I am faced with a decision of weighing the facts of a case in which both sides have very different versions of what happened, I try to be impartial and impersonal.

In the case of Joe Hunt, the people who vouch for his character and innocence are all outstanding people I have known for many years. For me, their integrity is beyond question. The case against Joe has many "red flags" and inconsistencies. I have to say, I believe Mr. Hunt is innocent of the charges and should be allowed to be free.

I know he will receive the support he will require to reenter society. During his incarceration he has set an example of the type of citizen he will be once freed. I encourage you to consider this case carefully and grant Mr. Hunt his freedom.

Sincerely,

  
Gary McSweeney



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

Gaurja Prashar

[REDACTED] 3

August 8<sup>th</sup>, 2020

To: Governor Newsom

Cc: CC1 Maldonado, CDCR

Dear Sir,

My name is Gaurja and I'm part of Ananda World Brotherhood Village on the outskirts of Nevada City. I serve here at the Ananda Living Wisdom School as a teacher and my main area of service is with the Ananda Family Ministry and the children and youth of our community. Just to give you an idea of my connection to Ananda: I am originally from India but have been part of Ananda since the age of 14 when I became friends with the founder J. Donald Walters (also known as Swami Kriyananda). It's been 17 years living and practicing the teachings of Paramhansa Yogananda and Swami Kriyananda, and I must say that my journey has been very fulfilling in every way.

I would like to bring to your attention that Joe Hunt, whose commutation you are considering, has been a shining light in my life recently even though I do not know him personally yet. I read about him, I heard about him from his family members, and many long-time members of Ananda. All I see when I look at his picture is – kindness in his eyes, and a deep faith in his soul's spiritual destiny. All that I read about him and what he does, supports that feeling I get about him. Joe Hunt has fought the hard conditions of prison life, has lived with the thought that he might never be free again, and despite that he has come out like a torch bearer for all those around him, even us who are living normal lives. Last year for Ananda's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, he joined his family in raising 1 to 2 million dollars for the building of a Temple of Light at Ananda Village. I was in India still when I heard about his efforts (this was late 2018) and instantly I knew I would do everything I could, even though I didn't earn very much, to raise money for the temple and inspire other people in India to do the same. I just felt so touched that a man who hadn't seen the light of day (so to speak) behind bars for decades together was raising his spirits and doing such amazing and selfless work for humanity. I think it was like a miracle for me and I felt called to action because if someone much less fortunate can be so generous, then can't I? I immediately went on to do a fundraiser and involved ten others to donate. Then, people in our other Ananda centers, like New Delhi, also felt inspired to do fundraisers for the Temple of Light. Soon, many people all over India were donating to the Temple of Light project following Joe Hunt's example.

I want to share with you that Joe Hunt feels to me, in my heart, like a true man of God. He has helped so many prison mates get reductions in sentences, and that too only after he felt they were committed to changing their ways, and living life nobly and in a righteous way rather than a criminal way again. I think Joe Hunt respects that inner spirit in each human being which wants to improve itself. He has supported the building of a Boys Club in one of the prisons where he was, where the prison inmates were helped to process their feelings, get over the sadness, the guilt, the remorse,

the frustration, and release all that to be able to feel peace and hope again. Inmates who went through that program, and were eventually allowed to be free, all (100%) of them have had clean records ever since then. You can imagine what a beautiful testimony this is for Joe Hunt's efforts to help bring about true transformations for those behind bars. If you could give your approval for his final release, I know that Joe Hunt will continue with his efforts to bring about transformations and healing to prison inmates in the United States. He has already helped so many and he can do so much more! He has it in him to be able to serve the world in the spirit of a true missionary. He also hopes of having children someday and I can picture him teaching them kindness and sensitivity to other people's realities. There are very few in the world who aspire for such high ideals.

Governor Newsom, I would also like to say to you that you would be one of the forerunners in the arena of bringing change and a nationwide movement toward changing the fate of hundreds of prisoners with taking a step such as the one I am requesting. Freeing Joe Hunt would be a huge step forward because one, I feel you would be freeing someone who is truly deserving (having given his heart and soul to selfless service while behind bars) and two, many would get a ray of hope and healing that perhaps there is light at the end of the road for them too. So even if for the sake of achieving freedom someday, many prisoners start to initiate becoming better, doing all in their capacity to improve themselves and think of how they can be assets to society once free, rather than a problem to society – it would be well worth it! To receive an opportunity to prove themselves capable of leading transformed lives – that is a huge gift – one that a loving father, like God, would want to bestow on his erring children after they have learned their lessons. Your kindness and efforts hence, will not only be noted and celebrated by the people of United States, Europe and the world, but more importantly, by our Heavenly Father, God. This is a very important time for all of us in the world and how grateful we are, Joe Hunt's brothers and sisters in spirit, that we can make a request to you for his commutation. It is a very sincere and heartfelt request we make.

Hoping you and all those you love are well and healthy!

Warm Regards



Gaurja Prashar



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

August 2, 2020

TO: Governor Gavin Newsom  
cc: CC1 Maldonado, CDCR

My name is Colleen Heater, and I am writing regarding Joe Hunt and his Governor's Commutation Application D-61863.

I am a minister for Ananda Church of Self-Realization and have lived at Ananda Village in Nevada City, CA for 23 years. I am a retired Marriage & Family Therapist, living with my husband of 23 years. We both serve the Ananda Music Ministry through the choir and providing music for Sunday Service and events.

Our spiritual goal is to seek inner peace through daily meditation and service to others. One of our mottos is "People are more important than things," and our emphasis is to offer meditation techniques to people around the world. This is how Joe Hunt was introduced to me. Ananda Ministers had been visiting him in prison since 1987 and have told our congregation about his life and his situation. We have had updates on his attempts for release after 35 years in prison, and have prayed for his release.

*I have read the history of his incarceration and his exemplary record in prison, helping fellow inmates to be released and his non-stop counseling for others in the same situation as himself. His life story is one of incredible courage in facing all the odds of being incarcerated for life without parole while being innocent. I am in awe of his strength of character to persevere, and, his inexhaustible ability to channel his energy to serve his fellow inmates in finding freedom.*

There is no doubt in my mind, that a man of Joe Hunt's character is not a threat to society and has more than served his sentence. There is not more he could possibly do to prove this point and when released he will be an asset to a community, who will welcome him with open arms.

Please take into consideration, that Joe Hunt will be a benefit to society. His family and friends are eager for his soul to find peace outside of prison and share their lives with him once again.

You can contact me at [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

Colleen Heater

[REDACTED]



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Regarding Joe Hunt, D-61683, Governor's Commutation Application

August 7, 2020

To: Governor Gavin Newsom

Cc: CC1 Maldonado, CDCR

Dear Sirs,

My name is Deborah Golub-Gregorelli; I am a US citizen and resident of California. For the past 30 years I have lived in the Ananda community near Assisi, Italy, where I serve as a minister, teacher and administrator. I have been part of Ananda for over 40 years, first in California and now in Italy, and it has brought me great joy and fulfillment to live and work with a group of people dedicated to the principles of simple living, high ideals, and service to others

I am writing to ask you to release Joe Hunt from prison. I have not met Joe in person, but I have followed his story for many years, and I deeply feel that the time has come for him to be set free, after having served 35 years.

As I said, I do not know Joe personally, but I have many dear friends at Ananda Village in California who do know him, and whose judgement and ability to read a person's character I trust completely. From them, I have learned that he is a gentle, kind person who is deeply dedicated to a spiritual life and to helping his fellow human beings.

I have been very inspired by what I have heard and read of Joe's activities. In an incredibly generous act, he helped put together a donation of one million dollars to build the Temple of Light at Ananda Village. He has also been active in prison, helping other inmates. He created a men's group, which helps prisoners to work on their emotional responses to the events in their life, and he has offered legal assistance to his fellow inmates, having studied law while he was in prison. He has served as a friend and offered support to many people in prison, giving them hope and inspiration.

I am certain that when Joe is released, he will be a valuable asset to society and to the community he lives in. He has been invited to live at Ananda Village in California, where he will be surrounded by friends who love him and will support him as he makes the transition from prison life. Joe is a good man and deserves your serious consideration as a candidate for commutation.

Thank you for your time and attention to this vitally important matter. And best wishes for the service you offer in your very challenging job of representing the people of California.

Sincerely,

(  
(  
Deborah Golub-Gregorelli



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

8/12/20

To Governor Gavin Newsom  
cc: CC1 Maldonando, CDCR

My name is Gloria Dunnagan. I moved to the Ananda Community thirty-five years ago after taking early retirement as an Internal Bank Examiner for Wells Fargo Bank. I wanted to live a more God centered life, with other spiritual minded people, and Ananda provided that. It has been my joy to live and work at Ananda with others who are dedicated to God, truth and service to others.

Although I have not had the opportunity to meet Joe Hunt, I have many friends who have spent time with him, and were impressed by his devotion and service to others in prison. Our Spiritual Directors, Jyotish and Devi Novak, have shared their experiences and interactions with Joe over the years. They share that he has a very open heart and is dedicated to God through his devotion and spiritual practices through these many years of incarceration.

It seems to me that after 35 years of prison, with a clean record, Joe Hunt deserves to be granted a commutation. I know that Joe would be welcomed with open arms into any of our Ananda communities, and feel he would be an asset to our work.

I would be glad to speak to anyone who has additional questions for me.

Sincerely,

[Redacted signature]

Gloria Dunnagan

[Redacted contact information]



