

Arthur Manzo

[REDACTED]

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 Arthur Manzo. I had an Advanced Care dental practice in Redwood City, California. I am now retired. For 45 years I have consoled people who thought they had hopeless problems, taught others who did not understand how to curb the ravages of dental disease, and improved many functional and cosmetic issue suffered from these problems. I certainly was a part of human caring, compassion for, and understanding of others. I know of love in my life. I hear about these traits in Joe Hunt.

I have a most wonderful wife, Jan, who shares the love for taking care of others, and a grown daughter, Bianca.

I believe that a person who has similar caring traits, as Joe Hunt exhibited in his prison life, has these characteristics deeply seated in his core. He is this wholesome person, not faking it. In my opinion, this is something he truly possesses and exudes. I do not personally know Joe Hunt. My contact with him and his accomplishments comes from fellow Ananda members and his family. I understand Joe has made quite a good name for himself with other prisoners and prison staff, working with prisoners composing letters and briefs to help their cases, and offering spiritual guidance to others.

After 36 years of being incarcerated it's time to give Joe Hunt freedom in his community. I strongly believe he will be an exemplary citizen to be proud of. Will you please give him that chance and consider commutation of his sentence?

Thank you for hearing my plea for Joe Hunt. If you need to contact me I can be reached at

[REDACTED]

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]



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

August 12, 2020

To: Governor Gavin Newsom
CC: CC1 Maldonado, CDCR

Dear Sirs,

My name is Melvin Betts. I am a minister and school teacher at a spiritual community located at Ananda Village. I have lived and taught here for over 35 years. Our focus in life is developing ourselves through meditation, service and practicing the presence of the Divine in our daily lives. I particularly treasure my lifetime spent backpacking and mountain climbing with family and friends in California's wonderful Sierras, Yosemite National Park and Point Reyes National Seashore, where it is easy to feel god's touch in nature. I have raised four sons here and know that living in this environment, surrounded by like minded people at the Ananda Community is very powerful and uplifting.

I have never met Joe Hunt in person but I know he is a meditator, teaches others to meditate and offers support and inspiration to other people in confinement . I know this through other Ananda Ministers who have taught him meditation techniques and visited him. I do know that Joe has greatly helped our community raise funds to build A Temple of Light that was completed in July 2019 and celebrated at our 50th Anniversary by devotees from around the world including Europe, India and South America. I believe Joe would continue to serve, meditate and be a beacon of light here in our community and to others around the world. Ananda community members would be a natural support network for Joe. These are the reasons I join others in requesting Joe's sentence be commuted.

Thank you for reading my letter of support for Joe Hunt and considering his commutation at this time. I would be very glad to speak with anyone who had any questions for me.

Sincerely,

[Redacted signature]

Melvin David Betts

[Redacted contact information]



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

August 14, 2020

To: Governor Gavin Newsom

Cc: CC1 Maldonado, CDCR

My name is David Steinmetz. I am a retired engineer and minister living in the Ananda Cooperative Village in Nevada City, California. For nearly 50 years I have been living and serving in one or another Ananda centers. In that time I have seen again and again how spiritual practices of meditation and right living have brought out the best in people and from what I understand Joe Hunt is an outstanding example of that.

While I have not met Joe in person, I am familiar with correspondence between my wife and Joe regarding a project to create a large bronze statue of Paramhansa Yogananda that is bringing spiritual inspiration to many a devotee of that yoga Master. It was Joe's enthusiastic support that made the statue possible.

Through most of the years of his prison term I have been in touch with the Ananda ministers and others who have served Joe, hearing about the many ways in which he has served others and the ways in which he has embraced spiritual teachings all within the difficult prison environment. These accounts from people whose judgement and integrity I respect highly are very inspiring.

I believe that Joe has learned whatever he needed to from his incarceration and way beyond that. He certainly deserves to be released and society would benefit from his presence. He would find a very welcoming response and all the support he could possibly need for his re-entry into society from our Ananda Community.

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

Thank you for taking the time to read this plea. I would be glad to communicate further if you wish. My contact information is below.

Sincerely,

[Redacted signature]

David Steinmetz

[Redacted contact information]



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

Catherine L. Knecht



August 12, 2020

To: Governor Gavin Newsom

Cc: CC1 Maldonado, CDCR

To those considering this application:

You would surely appreciate knowing a little about me and why I strongly support the release of Joe Hunt. I've been a resident of California now for 43 years, drawn here from the Midwest, in part by what I always felt – even from a distance – to be the more uplifted, expansive (as opposed to in-grown) energy of this state. I've never been disappointed.

I have lived for these happy years in California in Ananda Village, a cooperative (NOT communal) spiritual community, 17 miles outside of Nevada City. For 26 years I served as Ananda's Director of Development, and more recently have been teaching meditation at our year-round retreat center.

Around 200 of us live on over 1000 acres of land in the Sierra Nevada foothills. There is a core of us (around 80 people) who have lived here for at least 25 years. What drew me here was an opportunity to live with like-minded people who want to put simple living and inner communion with God at the very center of our lives – whether we're meditating or working at a vast variety of jobs, raising families, growing food, teaching in Nevada City's schools, serving on the fire board or offering medical care to this part of Nevada County. We share the non-sectarian principles of meditation and yoga with hundreds of thousands of people, in-person and digitally, around the world.

I first heard of Joe Hunt at least twenty five years ago. Two of my friends, then serving as directors/ministers for Ananda's center in Sacramento, and later, Rancho Cordova, began visiting Joe. They would regularly send updates on Joe, how he was doing and, to the great inspiration of many of us, Joe's deepening practice of meditation and his great love for God. I heard countless stories of his overcoming every kind of obstacle it seems any human could face, always while maintaining a spirit of even-mindedness and kindness.

In more recent days some of Joe's letters have been shared more widely in our Ananda community and beyond. (Many people living in our area, including Nevada City itself, and Grass Valley, our "sister city," come to our annual Tulip Festival in April, which drew over 17,000 last year, and/or attend Sunday services and classes at Ananda Village.) My own commitment to doing whatever I could to seek Joe's release came with his more recent letters as he encountered life-threatening problems with his heart and serious arrhythmias.

Having walked through a similar, heart-wrenching experience with my father, Joe's self-surrendered patience while moving through the gauntlet of the medical system, and the gratitude he expressed for whatever was his to endure moved me profoundly.

Some of his heart difficulties have overlapped with the spike in COVID19-related infections and deaths – especially among the prison population. My concern for Joe has been acute. When I learned that it might be possible, at last, for him to be released, this appeal on Joe's behalf became my highest priority. The need to decrease the number of people incarcerated and the wonderful contribution that Joe could make beyond prison walls are surely "flowing together," in perfect accord, it seems.

Joe Hunt is assured of a home at Ananda Village, if that's what he chooses. The warmest of welcomes awaits him in this community. We would be more than merely happy to have him take up residence here: we would be deeply honored. Many of us feel it is the very least we can offer someone who has given us – through his letters and all the ways he's found to share his life and his devotion to God – a message of profound faith and joyful surrender to whatever comes. We hope very much that you will feel to commute his sentence and make this next step for him one that offers him even broader possibilities for sharing his extraordinary faith and message of how divine grace can transform us, wherever life places us.

Thank you to those of you who are reviewing those being considered for sentence commutation. It is a profoundly important service you're offering.

Sincerely,

Catherine Knecht



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

**To: Governor Gavin Newsom,
Cc: CC1 Maldonado, CDCR**

August 12, 2020

My name is Clark Francisco. I am a software engineer & database administrator, working in Nevada City, California. I believe that people should be imprisoned for bad crimes, but that they should also be rehabilitated. It sure seems that Joe has been more than rehabilitated, he has transformed himself into a better person.

I don't know Joe personally, but I have been inspired by his story. He has helped other inmates, not joined any prison gangs, been cooperative with guards & meditates every day. He helped start a self help group in 1996, and later started another in 1998 which has lasted at least 14 years.

Joe has spent 35 years in prison, and is now 60 years old in a prison rampant with Covid-19. He has cardiomyopathy (heart failure) which together with Covid-19, could contribute to his untimely death. Joe no longer appears to be any threat to our society, and from his past actions it seems he would continue to contribute to our society when out of prison. If his sentence was commuted, he would have lots of support from me, friends & supporters in the Ananda Church congregation, Ananda Church itself & his sister Katherine Olivier. Please Governor Newsom, won't you consider commuting Joe's sentence.

Best Regards,

([REDACTED])

Clark Francisco

[REDACTED]



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

Cheryll M. Barsic

[REDACTED]

August 4, 2020

To: Governor Gavin Newsom

Cc: CC1 Maldonado, CDCR

My name is Cheryll Barsic, and I am writing in regard to Joe Hunt, D-61863, Governor's Commutation application.

I have been a member of the spiritual community, Ananda, in Nevada City California for 20 years. My husband worked for NASA as an engineer and i was a counselor at public school, working mainly with children at risk. After raising our five wonderful children, we retired were ready to live a simpler and quieter life, within a community of meditators. We have a wonderful life at Ananda. I am grateful for it and wish to share it.

I became familiar with Joe Hunt through members of our community, of whom I respect. They speak of his kindness, patience and responsibility toward the wellbeing of his fellow inmates. During his 35 years of incarceration he has remained a positive example of acceptance with peace, regardless of his situation. That shows a great sense of self control and high thinking. He has had a very positive effect on my live by his example and his generosity.

I would like to see him released from prison and integrated into our community where he can be surrounded by friends and family, and can be a positive influence in the lives of many. We would welcome him and give him the support of friendship and sense and security of community.

Thank you for reading my letter and for considering my request.

I am happy to answer any questions you may have. I can be reached at [REDACTED], or email [REDACTED]

Respectfully,

[REDACTED]

Cheryll M. Barsic



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

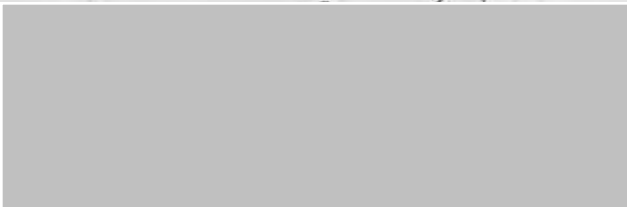
Wednesday, August 12, 2020

Dear,
Governor Gavin Newsom
cc: CC1 Maldonado, CDCR

I am a part of the spiritual community, Ananda. I do not know Jairam personally but Jyotish and Devi Novak are great friends of mine and I have full faith in their judgement of Jairam's character. I sincerely believe that 35 years in prison is enough and that Jairam must be released now.

Jairam has spent approximately 35 years in custody. His conduct in prison has been exemplary. It might reasonably be argued that anything beyond 20 or 25 years is excessive, serving neither society nor contributing to deterrence. Most civilized countries parole after 20 years even for the most serious offenses.

Sincerely,
Zoë Dreizen-Nelson



To: Governor Gavin Newsom
Cc: CC1 Maldonado, CDCR

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

I 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. It does not serve society to keep Joe locked up -- it just wastes taxpayer money.

I believe, for these reasons, that Joe is a very strong candidate for commutation. **If he is released, he would be welcomed with wide open arms by our Ananda spiritual community.** Would you please give him a chance to be considered by the parole board for release?

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

Sincerely,

Date: 8/20/20

Printed Name: [Redacted]

Phone Number: [Redacted]

Email Address: [Redacted]



This is in regard to Joe Hunt, D-61853, Governor's Commutation Application

To: Governor Gavin Newsom

Cc: CC1 Maldonado, CDCR

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

I 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. It does not serve society to keep Joe locked up -- it just wastes taxpayer money.

I believe, for these reasons, that Joe is a very strong candidate for commutation. **If he is released, he would be welcomed with wide open arms by our Ananda spiritual community.** Would you please give him a chance to be considered by the parole board for release?

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

Sincerely,

[Redacted Signature]



Date: 8/12/20

Printed Name: [Redacted]

Phone Number: [Redacted]

Email Address: [Redacted]

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

August 18, 2020

To: Governor Gavin Newsom
Cc: CC1 Maldonado, CDCR

My name is Shawn Peck. I am a web content writer based in Edmonds, Washington. I have three loving daughters and five beautiful grandchildren. I believe that if there's a chance that someone may have been unfairly incarcerated, their voice should be heard.

Although I do not know Joe personally, I have heard of his kindness and helpfulness to others while in prison. That fact alone, however, would not be grounds for releasing him. I believe he should be released in part because I have read the entire report by Gary K. Dubcoff, and I find it beyond credible. It does much more than cast doubt on the correctness of Joe's conviction; to the contrary, I feel it is all but proof of his innocence. Given that foundation, I believe Joe should be considered for release, even if you are more skeptical than I about Mr. Dubcoff's report, because Joe can do so much good as a free man and is clearly no danger to anyone.

My plea is that you give Joe Hunt a chance to be considered for release by the parole board. Just a chance—that is all I ask.

Thank you so much for reading this letter. I can be reached at [REDACTED] or [REDACTED] if you need to contact me for any reason.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

Shawn B. Peck



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

August 11, 2020

Governor Gavin Newsom
Cc: CC1 Maldonado, CDCR

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

I am an ordained minister for Ananda Church of Self-Realization, and a ninth-degree black belt in Kenpo Karate. I train professional and amateur athletes in various settings including public schools, colleges, churches, juvenile detention centers, as well as Folsom Prison to name a few. I have met and worked with both the worst and the best of humanity. Years ago, Joe Hunt was considered by many to be among the worst. Today, many consider Joe Hunt to be one of the best.

From people I respect enormously, I have learned how Joe continues to go out of his way to serve many in need. I believe those whose own reputations are beyond reproach when they tell me that Joe has not only selflessly donated his money, time, and wisdom, but he has often sacrificed his own health and energy to help others, all without the thought of compensation.

The stories our worldwide spiritual community have heard about Joe Hunt have inspired us to do our part in making the world a better place. I am certain that should you commute Joe Hunt's sentence, you'll unfetter an invaluable force for goodness in potentially thousands of lives within our community and our country, and play a significant role yourself in making the world a better place.

Please consider Joe Hunt's commutation application with all seriousness. He has a worldwide spiritual community that is ready and willing to support him in every aspect of his life, most especially in how he can further serve humanity.

Should you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me at [REDACTED].

Best Regards,

[REDACTED]
Andre Sims



RE: Joe Hunt's (D61863) petition for commutation of sentence
Dear Governor Gavin Newsom
Cc: CC1Maldonado, CDCR

Let me introduce myself, my name is Jennifer Black and I am a graduate of Ohio University where I earned a degree in Sociology. Towards the end of my studies, I did an internship for the Ohio department of parole & probations.

This remains for me among the most important & meaningful jobs that I ever had. I have the experience of visiting correctional facilities & being the only woman walking the long halls of caged men

I always felt it as an honor to bring a touch of feminine spirit & motherly love into those environments and I could see those men behind bars beyond their crimes, and more in terms of being victims of unfortunate circumstances.

Yes, men whose consciousness and surrounding environments led them to get caught for doing some really unintelligent things... a kind of deeply engrained "Seemed like a good idea at the time" mentality!

Following university, I had applied for a job in the Ohio prison system as a rehabilitation councillor, but with budget cuts, that position was made redundant even before anyone was hired to do the job.

So was my short-lived experience in the world of correctional institutions.

Now in reading the pleas for Joe Hunt's freedom, I am taken back to that place in my heart that knows that reform is possible even in the hearts of the most "hardened criminal".

It is deeply moving to learn how Joe has been such a life changing influence on societies down & out, forgotten and locked away population of men, of human beings.

It is profound that even through the bars of a prison cell that Joe has been able to transcend his own misfortune and to serve his time not by wasting away his days in folly, but by dedicating himself to the work of transforming the hearts and minds of others who are deeply in need of help.

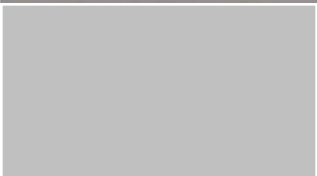
He is a great example of what giving one's life in service to others looks like even in the most unthinkable of situations & hardened of environments.

Though locked away for all of these years, Joe's ministry to others is that which has earned him his freedom. Mr. Hunt's liberty in the last 30+ years has only been lived as his own inner state of mind, in writing this letter, it is my hope that his release from prison will allow him to live fully into that freedom on the outside too.

In Joe Hunt's release, he is certain to continue to be of service to all of the lives that he touches in the world as he has so selflessly done from the confines of a prison cell. Please consider commuting his sentence and giving Joe Hunt his well-justified chance to be free.

With Great Belief in Justice,

Jennifer Black



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

Hiroko Barber



August 14, 2020

To: Governor Gavin Newsome

Cc: CC1 Maldonado, CDCR

Dear Sirs:

My name is Hiroko Barber. I am currently retired and live at Ananda Village Spiritual Community based on the teachings of Yogananda. I have been a resident here for six years. I am studying here and have made a commitment to daily spiritual practice and service to others.

Although I have never met Joe Hunt, I have heard of his personal development and good works while incarcerated. His self study of the law and his use of the legal skills he obtained to aid his fellow prisoners in obtaining reduced sentences particularly impressed me; I was born and raised in Japan, where such a thing never occurs to my knowledge.

I also feel a sense of gratitude to Mr. Hunt for the contribution he made in helping to fund our village's Temple of Light.

I sincerely believe that Joe Hunt's exemplary attitude and his striving to better himself and those around him make him deserving of early release.

Thank you for reading my letter in support of Joe Hunt's sentence commutation.

Sincerely,



Hiroko Barber



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

Irene Schulman



August 13, 2020

To: Governor Gavin Newsom

Cc: CC1 Maldonado, CDCR

My name is Irene Schulman and I am not a writer, so my letter will be relatively short and simple. Was raised in a family of twelve siblings (all of which are quite different). I began working with education in 1996, and I have served as an educator in the Education for Life System since then. Presently I am a mentor teacher for Education for Life.

Growing up in the ghetto in Sacramento, Ca, my relatives and friends were those who have worked in the criminal justice system, and others who served time in prisons. As I understand it, prisons are institutions designed to allow prisoners to reflect and to change the direction of their lives, so they stand a better chance of not returning. During this time, some prisoners begin to search spiritually.

For some years, my husband and I have been serving in a prison ministry here at Ananda Village. We receive correspondence from those who find themselves incarcerated and are striving to develop spiritually. We then send materials they request about meditation, yoga, and spiritual philosophy. To my surprise, these letters are not from prisoners feeling sorry for themselves. After being in prison for some time, many of these people accept their circumstances and are looking for a way to reform themselves. This is a beautiful transformation to witness. With this deeper understanding of life, I feel they would be in a better situation when reentering society.

I can only imagine the responsibility one must feel in trying to decide if Joe Hunt has "paid his debt to society" and "how will he adjust". Although I do not know him personally, it seems to me (based on testimonies from people I respect) that he has learned to care and serve others and that he finds joy in this service. He has practiced this in prison. And if he's anything like others, once you find joy by serving others chances are you will no longer seek it in ways that are only self-serving.

When he comes out of prison, we will welcome him here, and I think he will adjust simply fine when he finds that his family has expanded to include a loving spiritual community. This is a community that will support his personal and spiritual wellbeing; it is a place that can offer him opportunities to continue to serve others.

I have lived at Ananda Village for nearly 40 years. The goal here is to keep expanding our ability to relate to others in a positive and uplifting way. It does not mean there is perfection, but it does mean that we all strive to be moving toward a greater sense of community and harmony.

Kind Regards,

[Redacted signature]

Irene Schulman

[Redacted contact information]



Jan F. Manzo

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 Jan Manzo. I am an office manager based in Redwood City, CA. I am married with an adult daughter.

I believe that everyone is innocent unless proven otherwise. From what the records show, there isn't any hard evidence that Joe Hunt killed Ron Liven. I just can't understand what happened here!

Joe Hunt has been shown to be an outstanding inmate. He has gone out of his way to help other inmates get out of prison. Joe hunt has shown by his volunteering at the prison and sharing his spiritual belief with other inmates that he has caring and love for others.

Because of the exposure to Joe Hunt's case at Ananda, my church and my friendship with his sister and brother-in-law, I began reading articles about him. From what I have read, there is a very weak case and no hard evidence for this conviction.

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

Thank you for reading my letter and please consider commutation for Joe Hunt.

Sincerely, Jan Manzo



August 8, 2020

To
Governor Gavin Newsom
Cc
CCI Maldonado, CDRC

Dear Sir



My name is Jayeeta Chakraborty from India and I am writing this letter with regards to Joe Hunt's, (D-61863), Governor's Commutation Application.

I live in India and have been studying and serving with Ananda Sangha (Ananda Church of Self Realization) since 2013. Prior to this I have been a Hotelier with over 25 years of International experience but lacking in internal peace. That is when I came across the famous classic Autobiography of a Yogi by Paramhansa Yogananda which lead me to Ananda Sangha. Currently I serve at the Paramhansa Yogananda Public Charitable Trust, the charitable wing of Ananda Sangha, which looks after almost 5000 elderly, abandoned, destitute widow mothers in the Holy City of Vrindavan, in India.

I personally have not met Joe Hunt, however since I have been associated with Ananda, we have regularly prayed for his wellbeing and release. We have heard wonderful reports of how he has been serving even in jail and I have always been inspired by his actions. He has put into practice in his life the prayer of one of Paramhansa Yogananda's highly elevated lady disciple, Sister Gyanmata, who would say, "Lord don't change the circumstances, change me instead". In all these years the only stories we have heard of Joe Hunt are of Joy and Service. The only pictures we have seen of Joe Hunt are ones of big smiles and sparkling eyes. Such a man is a boon to society. Imagine, inspite of being behind bars Joe Hunt inspires "All of Us" in far off India, how much more would he be able to offer society once he is free! We all pray for that day. We all pray for your compassion and understanding. In today's world people like Joe Hunt are much needed to bring peace and harmony. It amazes me to think how "one" soul can bring thousands of us together in complete love and peace without saying a word!

Dear Sirs, we leave our brother in your capable hands and pray for all of you. May God's will be done. May our Mother Divine bring lasting joy to your life.

Best wishes and much light,


Jayeeta Chakraborty




Jitendra Guindon
[REDACTED]

August 12, 2020

To: Governor Gavin Newsom
CC: CC1 Maldonado, CDCR

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

I would like to introduce myself: I moved to Ananda Village in Nevada City, California in 2014, arriving from Rhode Island. I moved here out of my desire to live with others who had the same desire to live a life in service to others. Also, I moved here to seek an opportunity to learn more about my true self and my relationship with God. After my time living in a spiritual community, I have understood the true meaning of divine friendship and how to give to others in a spirit of true self offering.

I have become very good friends with Joe Hunt's sister and became acquainted with Joe Hunt through his family. From the letters I have read and the relationship that I have seen unfold between Joe and those who have visited him, it has touched my heart to see how Joe has gained the level of true self-awareness. His only desire now is to help others and see others succeed. Given the circumstances that surround Joe, his actions in helping others are a true reflection of his greatness and humbleness.

I strongly believe that after serving 35 years in prison, Joe deserves to be released for integration back into the community. With his focus on the spiritual path and the lifestyle that he has embraced while in prison, it is only going to expand and become ever more pure as he integrates back into the world. He will have the opportunity to give to others and seek ever more deeply his understanding that the most important things in life is to give to others and find ways of expanding the heart to embrace all. We all deserve a chance in life to awaken this inner purity of the heart. Given Joe's focus and dedication over the many years, while in prison, he deserves this opportunity. He will be embraced by his spiritual family which will only support him in going deeper in this journey of finding the aspect that resides in himself that also is in everyone.

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter in support of Joe Hunt. If you have any questions, or would like to follow up on this letter, feel free to contact me. I can be reached at [REDACTED] or via email at [REDACTED].

Many blessings to you in your position of using your God given ability to make the right decisions that impact the lives of many.

Regards,

[REDACTED]
Jitendra Guindon



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 Joyce Wong, and I'm writing in regard to Joe Hunt, D-61863, Governor's Commutation Application.

Let me first introduce myself - I was born in Hong Kong and immigrated to the United States with my family in 1977, and have been a naturalized citizen since 1982. Although my father had a successful business in Hong Kong, my parents chose to relinquish our ties there and move to the United States because we were inspired by the abiding values of our country: equality, freedom, opportunity. As a family, we quickly realize and appreciate every single day the privilege to live in the United States and the many freedoms and opportunities available, and we work hard to contribute to our new "home" as Americans. In 2003, however, I was at a very low point in my life (and nearly committed suicide). Under intense stress and despair, I went to Ananda Village, a spiritual community and retreat center located in the Sierra Foothills, for a retreat to learn yoga and meditation to help me cope with my problems. In time, not only did I heal myself through these teachings offered by Ananda, it had completely transformed my life and I'm now part of Ananda's thriving spiritual community in Mountain View, CA. It was here in the last decade, where I met and became friends with Joe Hunt's sister Katherine Olivier and his brother-in-law Michael Olivier, and learned about Joe, who has been in prison for over 35 years, sentenced to life without parole.

Although I have never met Joe directly myself, I feel a special kinship to him by the example he sets as an extraordinary human being. When our family immigrated to the United States, it was a huge opportunity to redefine our lives and create new opportunities for growth and contribute to the success of this country. Joe has completely expanded my understanding of human potential in what he has accomplished throughout his 35 years of imprisonment. To realize how he created a new reality for himself, within the confining walls of his prison, to grow and contribute to help others even while living through heart-breaking difficulties of prison life, is simply astonishing. I look back at my own life in those times of great despair and realize how much more arduous it would have been to experience the emotional turmoil amidst the harshness that those imprisoned go through day to day, the violence and hopelessness. Yet Joe Hunt has been able to rise from these circumstances to create greater meaning for his own life even while imprisoned, and for those around him.

There are countless documented examples of his selfless service, including writing legal briefs to help other prisoners faced with legal injustice of their prison sentence, co-founding the first men's group in a California prison (for the first 10 years, he was the clerk in charge and one of the main facilitators.) Joe, along with his family, helped to invest and raise a million dollars which they lovingly donated in helping us build a new Temple of Light at Ananda Village - this sanctuary now serves many thousands of people seeking to find solace, solutions, and spiritual upliftment.

Joe has clearly touched the lives of many, within and outside the prison walls, including a number of my friends, spiritual teachers and ministers whom I greatly respect. Through their testimony and unwavering support of Joe and through learning more about his life's journey, I strongly believe he would make an even greater impact if he is released from prison and continue to expand his ability to serve humanity. Very few people are able to achieve even a fraction of what Joe has done while in prison, under those conditions - this takes remarkable resiliency, perseverance, optimism, compassion and faith, which Joe has demonstrated.

I believe that every person has within himself the ability to rise, to learn from everything that happens in life and become transformed into his best self, and the ability to give and help others along the way. I believe in our country's principle of opportunity for all and in this particular situation, we have the ability to help Joe become an integral member of our society so that he can contribute in many more ways to improve the lives of others. Joe has been exemplary throughout his 35 years in prison and I fully support his release.

Governor Newsom, won't you please give Joe a chance to be considered for release by the parole board? It would mean so much to us, his friends and family, and to our community at large who is best served by outstanding individuals dedicated to living by high principles, selfless service, and great compassion. Our country, our world, greatly needs more human beings like Joe! He has a strong network of family and friends and spiritual community that he is a part of, so he will easily transition from prison life to be a fully functioning and contributing member of society.

Thank you so much for taking the time to read my letter of support for Joe Hunt's Commutation Application. If you have any questions, I can be contacted by email: [REDACTED] or by phone [REDACTED]

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]
Joyce Wong
[REDACTED]



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

August 7, 2020

Dear Sirs,

My name is Karen Busch and I am a minister serving at the Ananda Church in Portland, Oregon. I am writing on behalf of Joe Hunt. Although I have not yet met Joe personally, I've heard stories, told by deeply respected Ananda members who have known him for years, of his attitude and actions. It is inspiring to know of someone living in circumstances which most of us would find extremely challenging, to say the least, who could respond not only with calm centeredness for himself, but reach out to help those around him, in so many ways, from sharing spiritual teachings and legal advice to creating support groups.

Joe has already served more than three decades of his sentence and has shown himself ready for release. He will be welcomed and supported by Ananda members everywhere.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter. I can be reached at [REDACTED].

Sincerely,
Karen Busch

[REDACTED]

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

August 8, 2020

To: Governor Gavin Newsom
Cc: CC1 Maldonado, CDCR

Dear Governor Newsom,

Please receive this letter in support of Joe Hunt's application.

First, a bit about myself and my connection with Joe Hunt.

I am a 73 year old native born Californian, currently disabled and living in Portland, Oregon. I reluctantly left my home in California and moved to Portland in 2012 for medical treatment. I still own property in Santa Barbara County.

I live in a community of Ananda Church members, where I receive most of my care and support. Joe Hunt is also a member.

Although I don't know Joe personally, I have heard much about him over a period of about 20 years from church members who know him. His reputation is one of being an unfailingly positive person who seeks to be of service wherever life places him, including prison. I have been moved both by the stories about him, and by what he has written. A specific way he has contributed to our church is by raising 1 million dollars to complete our new temple. Without his help, we would probably still be struggling to finance it.

I was living and voting in California when voters passed the "Three Strikes You're Out" ballot measure. One argument against it was the high cost of keeping prisoners incarcerated even into old age. It costs a lot to keep old people going, and many require the kind of specialized medical care that I am getting. It's vital not to release prisoners who are a threat to public safety. But neither should we keep nonviolent prisoners incarcerated until they require nursing home or other expensive end-of-life care at taxpayers expense. This is a practical argument for his release.

Joe Hunt has already served over 30 years. In prison, he will simply continue to cost the taxpayers money. Outside, he has a community of people waiting to receive him, and can make a positive contribution. Please consider releasing him to us.

Thank you for considering this request. I can be reached at [REDACTED], should anyone wish to do so.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

Kathern A. Bhardwaj

[REDACTED]



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

August 2, 2020

To: Governor Gavin Newsom

Cc: CC1 Maldonado, CDCR

I have been living for the past forty years near Nevada City, California at Ananda Village, a community of about 200 people focused on the ideas of Paramahansa Yogananda, ideas at the heart of all religions. We try to live in a positive way, as a means to reach our highest spiritual potential.

I first heard about Joe Hunt about two years ago. Several trusted friends and several of the ministers at Ananda had been visiting him in prison, since he was interested in Yogananda. They all had inspiring stories of how Joe was trying to live in a positive way based on these ideas. They felt he deserved a chance to live a normal life outside of prison, and was by far one of the best candidates to do so successfully if allowed to do so. Reading about someone trying so hard to better themselves under very trying conditions really inspired me.

Joe created a men's group to help the people in jail to deal more positively with their situations.

He also learned about the laws so he could help the men there to get additional help with their legal situations. For many, they had their sentences lightened after additional consideration was given by the authorities.

I support the effort to ask you to pardon him. I have read that many of the prison staff and prisoners also support this. His exemplary life in prison makes one feel he would be an asset to society outside of prison.

If Joe chose to do so, he would be welcomed here at Ananda, or would become a helpful member of society wherever he lived.

If you wish to contact me further, please write to:

Ken Crawford

[Redacted Address]

Sincerely,

Ken Crawford

[Redacted Signature]

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

To: Governor Gavin Newsom

Cc: CC1 Maldonado, CDCR

We are writing today to express our support for commuting Joe Hunt's sentence, thereby allowing the parole board to consider his release from prison.

We have been part of the Ananda Church, to which Joe also belongs, for 25 years, and have been residents at Ananda Village (Nevada City, CA) for the past nine years. Although we don't know Joe (Jairam) directly, we're know his case through our neighbors, his family members, and the ministers of Ananda Church who have served his spiritual needs for many years.

During his incarceration, Jairam has provided great inspiration to many through his selflessness, his calm acceptance of his situation, his fortitude, and even his great generosity to Ananda Church and our residential communities like Ananda Village. Until we knew of Jairam's case, we never realized quite how much a person in prison could still give and share.

Because we are residents of a community where Jairam would visit and possibly live after his release, we must ask, is this a person we would welcome into our community as a neighbor? After all, the whole point of the state's Corrections system is to rehabilitate individuals so that they *can* rejoin the community. Given Jairam's character, as testified to by those who know him closely, our answer is an empathic Yes! Indeed, we look forward to getting to know Jairam personally.

We're aware of Jairam's physical conditions and his age that both put him at high risk for COVID-19. Furthermore, COVID-19 is placing an increased strain on the state of California as well as local municipalities. Releasing Jairam relieves this burden from the taxpayers and will allow Jairam to live out his remaining years among loving friends.

We ask you, therefore, to commute Jairam's sentence so that his case can be reviewed by the parole board.

Please feel free to contact us for any reason. Thank you for your kind consideration and your continued leadership of the great state of California.

Sincerely,



Kraig and Kristi Brockschmidt





Ananda

CHURCH OF SELF-REALIZATION of Nevada County

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

William D LoCicero

[REDACTED]

August 10, 2020

To: Governor Gavin Newsom
Cc: CC1 Maldonado, CDCR

Dear Governor Newsom,

I am writing in regard to Joe Hunt, D-61863, Governor's Commutation Application. I live in a spiritual community in the Sierra Foothills near Nevada City called Ananda Cooperative Village. It started along with many others in the 60's, but due to its fundamental spiritual focus, mainly a daily practice of meditation and service to others, the community survives to this day, whereas virtually all the rest have floundered. I joined the Ananda in 1978. In 1986 I became a minister and teacher. For the last 34 years I have served in some position of outreach here in California, as well as, in three of our branch communities in Seattle, Portland, and Dallas. There are nine altogether.

I, and many others, pray for the release of Joe Hunt. He has been incarcerated for 36 years. Decades ago he discovered Ananda's teachings and embraced them wholeheartedly. With beautiful spirit Joe accepted his fate, overcoming any self-pity or victim consciousness and turned his attention to helping others. Joe has practiced meditation for many years and became a minister and teacher himself teaching those in prison. He has been a positive influence to many, all who are open and ready for what Joe knows from his own experience, can change their lives.

I actually have never met Joe in person, though I can say I have come to know him from the many letters he has written over the years. And, through other ministers and friends that have met him that I fully trust, including the Spiritual Directors of our work. I believe in the saying "a tree is known by its fruit". Joe is a peace loving person that truly cares for the welfare of others. Just as in this same vein I have come to know your values, Governor Newsom. To stay informed of today news, I am an avid listener to NPR. From

the news coverage of the many issues today and your handling of them, particularly the Pandemic, I have come appreciate your leadership and see you to be a man of integrity. Someone we can trust at the helm. I thank you for your tireless efforts.

If released would Joe Hunt be a threat to society? Hardly the case. In fact, he will be an asset and will continue helping others in teaching the spiritual principles that enabled him to survive intact, through decades of imprisonment.

Would Joe Hunt be a financial drain? Again, not so. Through investments, Joe, his sister Kathleen & her husband, together raised over 1 million dollars towards our newly completed temple, called the Temple of Light.

After decades of being locked up will Joe face any kind of loneliness or isolation? He will be enthusiastically welcomed into our community and will have his home with us.

Sincerely,

William D. LoCicero



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

August 8, 2020

] [REDACTED] ?
]

To: Governor Gavin Newsom
Cc: CC1 Maldonado, CDCR

My name is Laura Rutledge and my wife's name is Autumn Pease. We are retired from the working life, members of the Ananda Church of Self-Realization, and are both renunciate members (tyagis) of the Nayaswami Order. We live in the home built by my late uncle, on 5+ acres in the forests of the western Cascade Mountains. We believe someone who has made a serious mistake or committed a crime has the potential to reform themselves from within through deep introspection, meditation, selfless giving, and intentional kindness to others.

We do not personally know Joe, but are friends with many people at Ananda, including Jyotish and Devi Novak, who do know him personally and have regularly visited him over the past few decades.

Although we have never met Joe Hunt, we have deep respect for him and are greatly inspired by his life — that he was able to begin a spiritual practice in such a challenging environment as prison, not to mention being transferred many times over the years and having had to deal with so much change, and that he has deepened his spiritual practice and keeps up with a daily meditation practice no matter into what prison environment he is placed.

We have read about his service to fellow inmates and have seen in person what his surprise gift of \$1 million has done to help build Ananda's Temple of Light at Ananda Village in California, a beacon of hope so needed for the world in so many ways right now.

He is a model prisoner and a kind, compassionate human being, devoting his energy and skills to serving those around him. Many inmates have testified through letters that they began to change their own lives as a result of their contact with Joe. He serves as a spiritual inspiration to many in the prisons in which he has served and where he serves now. And without a doubt we know that he stands as a spiritual and human inspiration to the thousands of us at Ananda throughout the world.

We believe that he is more than worthy of parole, would be an exceptional addition to our society, and most definitely deserves freedom from incarceration. Throughout his adult life he has been and continues to model the perfect example of a life well lived, no matter where, through his selfless service and kindness; compassion and calmness; respect toward others and harmonious actions; and friendship, gratitude, and joyfulness no matter the circumstances.

He would be such an amazing addition to society, and could help so many more people through his actions for them and as an inspiration to others by his own transformation. We believe that he is more than worthy of a commutation of his sentence, based on his exemplary life lived within prison walls for more than 35 years. He has more than paid his due, particularly for a crime that cannot even be proven, with many eyewitnesses testifying that they have seen the supposed murder victim, Ron Levin, alive and well.

Of the approximately 5400 inmates in California that have sentences of life without the possibility of parole, about 150 of these prisoners have received commutation. An objective comparison between these cases and the in-prison conduct of those released, would obviously demonstrate that Joe qualifies for commutation.

In addition to his exemplary in-prison conduct, there is the matter of his age, now 60, and his health condition, heart failure. Our wish is for Joe to simply live out his life peacefully, with family and spiritual friends, in an externally quiet, respectful, and calm environment, which he already, through hard work, carries within himself. We ask only that you look within, and with God's grace and wisdom, see the truth of this kind, humble, and peaceful man, Joe Hunt, and truly come to understand and know that he deserves freedom and the right to help and inspire all people, from outside prison walls, with a deep understanding of what freedom truly is. Please look into your heart and do the right thing.

We would be eternally grateful for this simple action of releasing Joe Hunt, our spiritual friend and co-devotee of Paramhansa Yogananda.

If you would like to contact us for any reason, we are reachable at

[REDACTED]

Many Blessings,

[REDACTED]

Laura Rutledge

Autumn Pease



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

To: Governor Gavin Newsom
Cc: CC1 Maldonado, CDCR

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



I 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. It does not serve society to keep Joe locked up -it just wastes taxpayer money.

I believe, for these reasons, that Joe is a very strong candidate for commutation. If he is released, he would be welcomed with wide open arms by our Ananda spiritual community. Would you please give him a chance to be considered by the parole board for release?

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

Sincerely,


Lin Turner
July 11, 2020




This is in regard to Joe Hunt, D06-1863, Governor's Commutation Application

August 14, 2020

To: Governor Gavin Newsom

Cc: CC1 Maldonado, CDCR

I would like to add my name to so many others who are asking, in the name of compassion, in the name of justice, that the larger picture of Joe Hunt be given consideration, and that his sentence be commuted so he may be eligible for parole and release from prison after these 35 years.

I have never met Joe personally, but I feel I know a lot about him from the testimonies of the parents fellow prisoners that he has helped, from the testimonies of my close friends and acquaintances who do know him personally - some for decades. I am also impressed by the court records that show the facts of his case which did indeed leave a large margin of doubt as to the validity of the verdict, and especially a sentence of life without parole. Nothing more so than the fact that he was convicted of murder yet no body has been found, and the alleged victim was seen many times after the alleged crime was committed.

But more than the fact of the case, it is my understanding that prison serves two purposes. One is to rehabilitate a criminal, and the other is remove an individual from having free rein in a community in order to protect the people who may come to harm from their criminal behavior.

Regardless of my opinions about the verdict and sentence, the fact of Joe's exemplary behavior and positive impact he has made on all of those around him while in prison certainly shows that he is neither in need of further rehabilitation or poses any threat to society.

I have had family in law enforcement, did some media work for the San Jose Police Dept., and had attorneys and a county judge in my earlier social circles. I was exposed to the travails of law enforcement and the justice system and am supportive of those who have embraced this dharma for the cause of justice, as best as it can be served. They all walk a very difficult path. I know that we all do the best we can in our given circumstances in each moment.

I have lived at Ananda Village since 1990, having come from San Jose, worked at Good Samaritan Hospital and with my husband as an Antiquities dealer in Los Gatos for 20 years before that. Working as a yoga philosophy and meditation teacher, and minister in these past 30 years has been immeasurably fulfilling to me.

Watching students make personal improvements that changed them in positive ways - especially those who have successfully overcome serious negative habits and destructive behaviors, and who have gone on to share that success by helping others, when they return home from retreat to their normal life, is nothing short of heroic.

What I see in, through the eyes, friendships, and testimonials about Joe Hunt are exactly this same scenario, and he has been through the forge of prison for such a long time, effecting change in himself and blessing all of those around him, helping them find their better self.

Joe has been an inspiration to me, and I know that if and when he is released, he will be coming to live in this small community where I live. I feel only joy at this prospect. I am a very recent widow, and I would welcome he and his wife into this community with open arms, and be available as a friend and guide as they adjust to not only a new life "outside" but a life where there are high ethical, moral, and spiritual expectations on everyone.

I see Joe as the poster-"man" of rehab (if he ever needed it) and certainly someone who will give to society, especially to those who need it the most, in very meaningful ways. I look forward to lending him a hand with this.

I hope that you will give him a chance to be considered by the parole board for release?

Thank you for your kind consideration. I can be reached via the below contact information if you would like to for any reason.

Many blessings,
Sincerely,

August 14, 2020

Lisa M. Powers





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

August 10, 2020

To: Governor Gavin Newsom

Cc: CCI Maldonado, CDCR

Dear Governor Gavin Newsom,

My name is Zoé Jane Matthews. I am of British nationality, but have been living in the Ananda Cooperative Spiritual Community, near Assisi, Italy for 20 years. I am one of the next generation leaders of the community, as well as a minister. I currently guide the community membership training process; several community support groups; and am part of the community expansion and development team, as well as our community council. I am the author of two successful books on health and natural eating and living. My life is dedicated to the ideals that the Ananda Communities represent: selfless service to God and humanity, cooperation, kindness, harmony, and brotherhood among all people and nations.

I am writing to you in regards to a cause that is very dear to me: Mr Joe Hunt. Although I have never met Mr Hunt in person, his life has touched me deeply. I first heard about Mr Hunt several years ago through a newsletter written by the spiritual leaders of the Ananda Village Community in Nevada City, California, John and Phyllis Novak. These are people whose integrity and judgement I trust implicitly; people who have been nationally recognised through the U.N. Global Peace Award, 2017. In this newsletter Mr Hunt's story was told: not only his outer story, but also his inner story about how he found his spiritual path and teacher through *Autobiography of a Yogi* by Paramhansa Yogananda and how, ever since, he has dedicated himself completely to his own inner transformation, as well as to helping others around him. Since then I have heard and read about Mr Hunt several other times, every time as an example and inspiration.

About two years ago, we received a newsletter about the building of the beautiful new Temple of Light at Ananda Village, California, in which the inspiring story was told of Mr Hunt, together with the aid of his sister and brother in law, raising and donating one million dollars to this Temple. Such commitment and dedication are rare, even among the most committed members of our Church. Last year, July 2019, I travelled to Ananda Village to be part of the inauguration of the Temple of Light. It is truly an exquisite, refined and beautiful building. It is dedicated to all religions and represents unity, harmony and peace among all religions and nations. Without the help of Mr Hunt, this beacon of hope and light in the world would not have been possible.

I have to say, however, that more than Mr Hunt's financial generosity, it is his spiritual character and example that has moved me the most. I have heard about his character from my aforementioned friends and spiritual teachers, John and Phyllis Novak, as well as several others, who personally know Mr Hunt and hold him in very high regard. They say that when he enters the visiting room he



is like a great shining light. They tell about how dedicated he is to his spiritual practices, how committed he is to his search for God, and how much he is helping other prisoners by his example, love and counsel. They describe him as “noble”. In support of their judgement, I have read 47 letters on the “freejoehunt” website, written by inmates and officers, testifying to his special and saintly character. They moved me to tears. The kindness and unconditional love towards all that Mr Hunt shows has changed the lives of countless men, who in turn are now helping to change the lives of other countless men. This love that he shares comes from his deep inner relationship with God. It is rare to find such an example of love in this world. Even though many of us at Ananda are ourselves ministers, I think many of us feel that Mr Hunt is of a higher calibre of ministry. I don’t know how many of us could love so unconditionally in such a violent, troubled and dark place as prison. Yet Mr Hunt does, every day.

Kind governor, I am please asking you to allow this prisoner, Mr Joe Hunt, to have a chance of freedom, that he may continue to be a light in this world and share his inspiring love for God with others. Mr Hunt, as you have no doubt read in every other letter from Ananda Worldwide members, will be more than accepted and welcomed into our community in Nevada City, California: It is will be an *honour* for us to receive him. As for his financial stability, I think the fact that Mr Hunt raised one million dollars for a Temple more than shows that he will be able to support himself! We are, however, cooperative communities, and every member receives the support that he or she needs.

Thank you so much for your time and consideration of this appeal. If I can be of further assistance, please do not hesitant to contact me by email or phone (see below).

God bless you.

Sincerely,



Mrs Zoé Jane Matthews

Ananda





Ananda

CHURCH OF SELF-REALIZATION of Nevada County

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

August 11, 2020

To: Governor Gavin Newsom
Cc: CC1 Maldonado, CDCR
commutations@gov.ca.gov

Dear Governor Newsom,

My name is Karen LoCicero. I live at *Ananda Village* in northern California, serving as a minister and teacher for *Ananda Church of Self-Realization*. I moved here in 1979, 41 years ago, and have lived both here, at *Ananda Village*, and in several branch *Ananda* communities, helping start some of them, co-directing, teaching and counseling.

In 1990 I was living in the *Ananda Palo Alto* community when I first heard about Joe Hunt. The community leaders at that time, David and Asha Praver, talked about visiting him in prison. Joe was held in high regard by them, by others who met him, and by Swami Kriyananda, founder and spiritual director of *Ananda*. Since then I have taken part in cards and letters to him and read letters he has sent to all of us at the community. Over the years Joe has contributed to many causes, *Ananda* being one of them.

Many things point to the fact that Joe has changed and become a truly responsible, mature and caring person. Early on in his incarceration he decided to take positive spiritual principles as his influence on how to behave, what to believe in, and how to treat people. One example is the story of a group of black men in the prison who hated and beat up all the white men present, except for Joe, who upon returning to the room, they embraced in friendship. This shows Joe's success in implementing the spiritual principles he believed in.

Joe has had an exemplary record during the 36 years he has been in prison. He has done more "good works" from the confines and limitations of jail than most people do in a lifetime of enjoying complete personal freedom. There are countless stories of people he has helped, both inmates and people outside of prison. (I know you have already heard many, so I won't elaborate on them.)

That Joe has a faithful, loving wife, supporting him and waiting to give him a caring home life, says much about Joe. Financially, he has proven that he has the ability to monetarily provide for himself and others, that he can make a healthy, positive livelihood, where ever he is.

Joe and his wife would be welcomed with open arms to be part of *Ananda Village*. We would have a house they can live in and support him and his wife in their spiritual and social life without hesitation. He is already part of our community in spirit and having him here in person would be a joy for all of us.

Joe is 60 years old now. His health has suffered from the enforced lifestyle of prison. He is beginning to need more care and attention to his health. At this point, do you think imprisonment has fulfilled its purpose in effecting any changes that it can to the good? It seems that at this point in time, keeping him in jail, on tax payers dime, is doing more harm than the advantage of him being a contributing member to society.

Joe has undoubtedly proven that in his freedom from incarceration he would be a positive and giving asset to society.

Thank you for your attention to the decision of Joe's commutation. I hold a high respect for you, Governor Newsom. I have been impressed with what I have seen and read in the news about you. We are all in your care here in California.

Should you wish to contact me, you can reach me at [REDACTED], or home number [REDACTED]. My address is: [REDACTED].

With warm regards,

[REDACTED]

Karen LoCicero



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

August 14, 2020

To: Governor Gavin Newsom

Cc: CC1 Maldonado, CDCR

Dear Governor Newsom,

My name is Matt Stickney and this is about Joe Hunt D-61863, Governor's commutation Application.

I have been aware of Joe Hunt and his prison situation for over 20 years and think it's time that he be released. A few of my friends and people whose opinion I truly respect have known Joe for years, they have visited with him during his 35 years in prison.

We all think that he has been in prison long enough for a crime that none of us think he has committed. That being said he has lived his life in prison dedicated to his highest ideal's and has been a model prisoner and has gained the respect of all those that have come to know him.

I truly believe that society would be better served with his release from prison. If you would need to connect with me for any reason please feel free to call me at [REDACTED] or email at [REDACTED].

Thank you for your time,

[REDACTED]
Matt Stickney



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

July 30, 2020

To: Governor Gavin Newsom Cc: CC1 Maldonado, CDCR

My name is Michelle Mall. I am a school administrator at Living Wisdom School in Beaverton, Oregon. I am a single mother with a 15 year old daughter and a dog. I have lived in Oregon and worked at Living Wisdom School since 2012. Before moving to Oregon, I lived in my hometown of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

I believe in allowing others the chance and opportunity to contribute to society wherever they are "planted". The California prison system must certainly have some good programs and opportunities in place that enable those incarcerated to improve their situation and make the best of their time allotted. Thank you to all who serve in the prisons to help those who must spend their days in confinement.

Though I do not know Joe Hunt personally, I do believe in his innocence and his actions in prison have demonstrated that he has used his time there to be of service to help others and make a real difference in people's lives. I have no doubt that he has been a good friend, mentor, counselor and role model for many people. If he can help others in such a harsh and challenging environment as prison, I can only imagine the good he could do in society at large if given the chance to be released. He **will** make a difference and be a force for positive change.

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

Thank you for your time and consideration. I can be reached by phone or email if you need to contact me for any reason.

[Redacted signature block]

[Redacted signature block]

Sincerely,

Michelle Mall

[Redacted contact information]



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

To: Governor Gavin Newsom's commutation desk

Dear Sir/Madam,

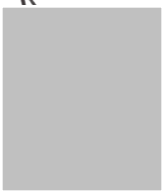
My name is Mitesh Karia. I work as a corporate banker in one of the largest French banks called Credit Agricole, currently based in Mumbai, India. I have also previously worked with Citibank, HSBC and Standard Chartered Bank. In my day to day job, I engaged with cross cultural teams across the globe... And in that same spirit of brotherhood, I have been associated with Ananda Worldwide, practicing the spiritual teachings of Paramhansa Yogananda for the last 6 years.

Coming to the central intent of this appeal for Joe Hunt, I would like to state that I have not met him personally and have known about him through common friends in Ananda Sangha, from those I have imbibed the lifelong teachings of meditation and spiritual living. I have come to understand from Joe's case that he is serving this prison sentence for a crime that he may be well incapable of committing, probably he is paying the penalty for an inadvertent association with criminals at the age of 24. His tale of redemption in prison is one of the awe-inspiring stories which I have heard till date, I am sure his fellow prisoners, guards, chaplains and counsellors would not agree less. I feel his humanity deserves a second chance of forgiveness by our society and those who represent us. The responsibility which you have on your shoulders is immense, and I beseech you to grant Joe freedom, this time.

Thank you for your kind consideration and also for helping me (along with many others, I am sure) extend my compassion towards a deserving human being. Tomorrow is India's Independence Day, and it would be a great gift to our brothers and sisters of this nation, if our plea for his freedom may be given due consideration.

If you have any questions please feel free to reach out to me at  !

Sincerely yours,



Mitesh Karia



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

Nefretete Rasheed, Ph.D.



August 12, 2020

TO: Governor Gavin Newsom

cc: CC1 Madonado, CDCR

Dear Sirs:

I am a resident of Ananda Village, a spiritual community in Northern California. I previously lived and worked in New York where I spent much of my professional career as an educator and clinical therapist. I moved to California nearly a decade ago to share and support the work of the Ananda Worldwide brotherhood community. This thriving, vibrant, and diverse community has been in existence for more than 50 years and is dedicated to the yogic teachings of Paramhansa Yogananda (*Autobiography of a Yogi*). The community continues to experience global growth, no doubt the result of its ongoing commitment to support and promote universal values and the inherent unity and fellowship of all.

In recent years, I have made a number of visits to see Joe Hunt who we know as Jairam. I learned about him from a few of our ministers who were making ongoing trips to various facilities over the years to visit with him. Implicit in his spiritual name *Jairam* is the word 'victory' and it was his victorious spirit and energy that compelled me to initially write to him and later visit him on a number of occasions. I was especially inspired by his tenacity to follow a path of personal development and spiritual development under the most extreme and difficult of circumstances. Even during our visits, we sat outside in the courtyard in both the heat and cold where we meditated, chanted, and prayed together.

Notably, during his decades of incarceration, Jairam has used his time and energy to help and serve others. This speaks to his generosity, magnanimous heart, and the strength of his character. Jairam told us that he had an 'office' in the prison and shared many stories about his cellmates with us. We learned that he used so much of his time in service to them - helping them with their cases, counseling them through their personal crises, and providing instruction and support for their spiritual practices. During a visit a few years ago, I remember how he laughed when my friend and I identified him as the Spiritual Director of our Stockton Center because of his work and ministry.

He had laughed at the time but this was not an entirely dubious title. Jairam has exemplified the highest and best principals of our path and teachings. He generates the nobility that discipline, thoughtfulness, kindness, and compassion endow.

I sincerely believe that Jairam's sentence 'life without parole' is at this point in time, excessive and I state without hyperbole - inhumane. I also feel that the years he has remaining in this life will be

better used on the other side of those walls where he will undoubtedly be an asset – not only to our community but to the greater community and society as well.

I must also mention that last year during the celebration of the Ananda Worldwide community's 50th anniversary, we dedicated our Temple of Light. This multi-million dollar temple of all religions was made possible, fairly exclusively, through the generous gifts and donations of our friends and members. Astonishingly, Jairam from prison along with two of his family members earned and donated a million dollars towards its completion. Jairam would be loved and admired without this singularly generous contribution. He would have found some way to express his expansive spirit and benevolent nature as he does on a regular basis from his prison cell. At this point with more than 35 years of incarceration, I sincerely feel that a commutation of his sentence would be judicious and more than appropriate.

Upon his release, Jairam will have a full and supportive community of more than 200 individuals who reside at Ananda Village along with the resources of his immediate family and friends. Jairam will be more than capable and able to meet his personal needs but he will also be able to depend on the physical, emotional, and intangible assets of a worldwide brotherhood community. I feel fortunate to count myself as one of his friends. I add my full support and endorsement for his release and am happy to provide more testimony or information, if needed, on his behalf. Please feel free to contact me by cell or email: [REDACTED] / [REDACTED].

Respectfully submitted,



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

August 14, 2020

To: Governor Gavin Newsom
Cc: CC1 Maldonado, CDCR

Dear Governor Newsom,

My name is Sara Cryer. I am an author and monastic living at the Ananda Meditation Retreat in the Sierra Nevada Mountains near Nevada City, California. I am co-founder of Ananda College of Living Wisdom, and the New Horizons Gap Year program www.anandacollege.org.

My latest book, "The Four Stages of Yoga" (by Nischala Cryer, my spiritual name) became a bestseller on Amazon. In that book I include stories of my meetings with many great saints and yogis of modern age, including the Dalai Lama and Mother Teresa of Calcutta.

When I was writing the chapter on Mother Teresa of Calcutta I had an interview with the sister of Joe Hunt, who is a prisoner before you for commutation. I learned all I could about Joe Hunt and was so inspired by his story and his love for God that I felt compelled to include something about prisoners in my story. I vowed one day to meet him and interview him. Joe Hunt has been an inspiration for me for many years. When I think of what his life must be like I cannot do anything but offer my prayers for his release. Yet Joe Hunt is not just a prisoner who inspires me. Many of his fellow prisoners and people he comes into contact with have remarked about his deep gentleness and generosity of spirit. I hope to meet him in the flesh someday soon. It is my prayer that I can talk with him and interview him so that his inspiring story can help thousands of other prisoners, their families, and their friends, hear about the adverse circumstances he has been through and how he was able to turn himself around and give his life to God over the past 40 years. You would be doing us all a favor and humanity would indeed be uplifted were you to commute his sentence.

With deepest thanks and gratitude,

[Redacted signature]

Sara Cryer

[Redacted address]



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

Dennis Schulman

[REDACTED]

August 13, 2020

To: Governor Gavin Newsom

Cc: CC1 Maldonado, CDCR

My name is Dennis Schulman. I live at Ananda Village, a spiritual community located outside of Nevada City, CA. I moved to Ananda in 1977. Just before moving here I graduated from Northeastern University School of Law and received my JD degree. Soon after graduation I had an experience that changed the direction of my life. I decided to devote my life to spiritual growth and decided that it would be best to live around others who had a similar interest. As with others in the community, my spiritual practices, which include meditation, prayer and service, are of utmost importance. My service to Ananda and the community outside of Ananda has been in the field of education. I have been a math teacher at the Ananda school for the past forty years, working with students of all ages. Outside of the community I have also taught math at public and private high schools and worked with many students around Nevada City and Sacramento as a tutor in math and test preparation. I have presented many SAT prep classes at high schools and privately in this area and also on the east coast, in RI, MA and CT. My other area of service at Ananda is in correspondence with prisoners who write to the community. Many are interested in books we publish related to the path of yoga and we are able to send them complementary copies of some of our publications. It has been a joy for me to correspond with prisoners who are sincerely interested in the spiritual teachings of yoga.

I have been aware of Joe Hunt's incarceration for several years, from communications from friends at Ananda. For all the years I have been here, I have never witnessed such universal praise and support for a prisoner, from people I greatly respect, as I have seen for Joe Hunt. All that I have heard, regarding his interactions with and help for his fellow inmates, his support from people working in the prisons, and his communications with my friends, has been extremely positive.

Joe Hunt has spent over thirty five years in prison. I don't think anyone can view him as a threat to society by his release. Judging from the life he has lived in prison I believe he can only be seen as a positive influence to those around him. I am sure he would involve himself in positive service to society. He also has a great many friends and family members who would offer him whatever support he needed after he is released.

Thank you for reading my letter and giving consideration to the release of Joe Hunt.
Should you wish to contact me, I am providing my contact information.

Kind Regards,



Dennis Schulman



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

To: Governor Gavin Newsom

Cc: CC1 Maldonado, CDCR

My name is Nivedita Joy and I am a resident of the Ananda spiritual community in Mountain View, CA. I am citizen of the united stated and a resident of California for over 12 years.

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

I 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.

Joe 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. It does not serve society to keep Joe locked up -- it just wastes taxpayer money.

I believe, for these reasons, that Joe is a very strong candidate for commutation. If he is released, **he would be welcomed with wide open arms by our Ananda spiritual community.** Would you please give him a chance to be considered by the parole board for release? Thank you for your kind consideration. I can be reached via the below contact information if you need to do so for any reason.

Sincerely,

[Redacted Signature]

Date: 8/14/20

Printed Name: [Redacted]

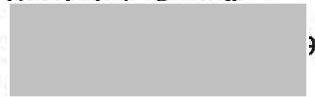
Phone Number: [Redacted]

Email Address: [Redacted]



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

Helen Broom



08.08.2020

To: Governor Gavin Newsom

Cc: CC1 Maldonado, CDCR

My name is Helen Broom and I am an English citizen, resident in Italy for the past year and a half, where I have been living as a member of the Ananda Assisi Community. Prior to moving to the community as a permanent resident I had been frequenting the centre since 2012 and have been a disciple of Paramhansa Yogananda since 2014. Truth has always been an important value in my life, and living this path continues to bring this value into an ever-deeper realisation for me; Dharma, right action, is one of the foundation stones of my life and is central to Yogananda's teachings. It is in this spirit that I am writing to you as I feel it is a matter of right action for me to support the petition for Mr. Hunt's release.

Although I don't know Mr. Hunt personally, I have heard of his situation on a number of occasions from people within Ananda Worldwide. Many of these people, whom I believe to be people of the high moral and spiritual fibre, have had a direct connection with him over the years. The two things that have always arisen during any reference to Mr. Hunt is that he is a good man who is sincerely dedicated to spiritually bettering himself and making a positive impact on the world around him, and that his incarceration was a miscarriage of justice. To me it seems quite remarkable that someone who feels he has been accused of something he didn't do and has consequently lost his liberty has been able to take the enormous step of letting go of the bitterness and resentment which must surely accompany such an experience, transforming these into the positive qualities and actions he has demonstrated by all accounts.

To me, healing, not punishment, has always been the deepest truth of rehabilitation. From what I understand, both from what I have heard from others, and from reflecting on Mr. Hunt's situation personally, it seems to me that this point in Mr. Hunt's journey has been reached. Might it not be appropriate, therefore, for him to be released from prison and have the possibility to be able to actively move forward with his life, using the experiences and learning he has garnered throughout these years in order to help others? I believe that everyone deserves a second chance in life, just as God extends this grace to us all repeatedly, and this could be an opportunity of bringing into tangible fruition that which Mr. Hunt has learned and healed within himself throughout his time in prison; it is an opportunity for the real potential for his rehabilitation to realise itself.

A central message of Yogananda's teachings is that we all have the potential for making a positive difference in this world within us. Although we may know that, my experience has been that sometimes having people believe in us helps us to realise that more fully. I believe that Mr. Hunt has this in abundance in his spiritual family at Ananda. If he were to be freed, I can only imagine that he would, as a disciple of Yogananda, make the most of the opportunity he has been given and dedicate the rest of his life to using what he has learned in service to his fellow man. It is central to the path we follow, and knowing that, I can only imagine that Mr. Hunt wouldn't hesitate to do so.

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter. Should you wish to contact me I am reachable on the following email address: [REDACTED]@t. Alternatively, my telephone number is ([REDACTED]) [REDACTED] 5.

Thank you again, and wishing you all the best.

Yours faithfully,

(Parvati) Helen Broom

[REDACTED]

LAW OFFICE OF
PAULETTE J. TAYLOR

August 17, 2020

Governor Gavin Newsom
cc: CC1 Maldonado, CDCR

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

Dear Governor Newsom:

I am a California corporate attorney practicing law since 1973 and the General Counsel of Sanderling Ventures, an early-stage biotech venture-capital firm. I am also a long-time member of Ananda residing here at Ananda Village in Nevada City, California.

As an Ananda member I am familiar with Joe Hunt and his situation. Joe has supported the Ananda community in so many ways over the years. He has been incarcerated most of his adult life and I believe it is prudent to release him. His reformation within the prison system was completed successfully a long ago and he has led an upstanding life for many years helping others both in prison and outside.

If Joe is released, he will reside here at the Ananda Community in Nevada City and will be welcomed by all of its members who regard him as a dear friend of the Community and an advanced spiritual seeker who made some unfortunate mistakes in his youth. **My husband and I fully support him. His sister Katherine Olivier will provide accommodations and financial support. We look forward to being his neighbor, friend and fellow spiritual seeker.** He is a very good person. There is no reason for further incarceration.

Please contact me if you have any questions about this letter.

Sending best wishes to you during this challenging time. We think you are doing a very good job with Covid.

Sincerely,



Paulette J. Taylor



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

August 11, 2020

Governor Gavin Newsom
Cc: CC1 Maldonado, CDCR

I am an American who keeps my legal address in California though I now reside in India, helping with an educational project here. The story of the incredibly unjust incarceration of prisoner Joe Hunt has just come to my attention through others long familiar with the case in my spiritual community. I am writing to encourage you to commute his sentence to *life with opportunity for parole* from his current sentence of *life without*.

His story is one you no doubt are now familiar with, so I will simply add my voice from the other side of the world. Although I am not a lawyer, I studied American law for three semesters and I cannot believe that in a just society, a man could go to prison for the murder of someone never even proved dead and was represented, according to several expert accounts, by incompetent legal counsel.

If my grandfather, who served as dean of Vanderbilt University's law school for a number of years, were alive today, I am sure he would join me in signing this appeal. At a time when countless California prisoners whose guilt is far more clearly established than Mr. Hunt's are being released en masse because of the corona virus, surely this man incarcerated on flimsy evidence should deserve similar consideration. He is now in his elder years with a heart condition, let alone a model prisoner from all accounts by correctional staff. Yet all he asks today, as he has over the years, is commutation of his sentence to *life with opportunity for parole*.

With appreciation for your consideration, and hope,

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Patricia Kirby
(Dr.) Patricia Kirby

A rectangular area at the bottom of the letter is redacted with a solid grey box, likely containing contact information.

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

August 13, 2020

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.

Soon after I became a part of the Ananda Church of Self-Realization community, I heard about Joe Hunt's incarceration and about how despite his circumstances he had become a peaceful, kind, and giving person. It is difficult enough for most people to find joy and peace in their lives, and to be able to do this while being in jail is an astonishing feat! Joe has proven that he can live peacefully by maintaining a zero-violence record throughout his incarceration, which has put him in the top 1% of inmates!

While I do not know all of the specifics of Joe Hunt's case, there is a widely-held belief that he is an innocent man, and that the person he is accused of killing has been seen alive. When I had been called-in for jury duty selection, I was talking with the Judge about how I had a tendency to believe that the person being accused is likely to be guilty (if not for the crime they were being charged with, then for something else illegal), and she talked with me about the justice system and asked if I didn't agree that someone being falsely accused was a travesty of the criminal justice system- I wholeheartedly agreed. In Joe's case, this type of travesty seems to be exactly what has occurred.

I implore you to give Joe a chance to plead his case to the parole board. If he is able to demonstrate his ability to live in the world as a free man, then why should he not be given the chance?

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Rael Rohm

Phone number: 

email: 1

In reference to Joe Hunt - D61863 - Governor's Commutation Application

Donald Lord, PhD

[REDACTED] 0

To Governor Gavin Newsom
cc: CC1 Maldonado, CDCR

Dear Sirs,

I am a retired Psychologist/Trainer/Consultant who spent many years in the helping professions and in teaching classes at various universities. I trained hundreds of Counselors and Social Workers over the years, as well as coordinating organizational development projects, such as a one year Federal Management and Organizational Development grant to train Child Welfare Administrators and Trainers from several Bay area social services departments (administered through San Jose State University) .

I am requesting that you fully pardon Joe Hunt from his remaining sentence. My understanding is that he has conducted himself over the years not only as a responsible agent for positive cooperation with prison authorities but as an example for fellow inmates who seek to develop themselves as good and useful citizens.

Governor, I have always seen you as a person who is more interested in being a positive force in society than one who focusses exclusively on accumulating fame, glory and wealth. This same desire—demonstrated by Joe as he lived much of his life in prison—has fueled my interest in his case.

I have known of Joe for many years through living nearby to Folsom prison, aware of his reputation as an unusually kind, positive and upstanding person. I have heard many stories of his dedication to helping deserving persons in the prison system with their legal processes, extending his largesse to family and his many friends outside. He has been a shining example of human possibilities in the face of a challenging environment.

Thank you for your consideration of this commutation. I can be reached at

[REDACTED] .

I must say that I have appreciated your thoughtfulness and competence in your conduct to date as governor.

Yours, Truly,

[REDACTED]

Donald Lord, PhD



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

Pamela Peterson
[REDACTED]

August 13, 2020

To: Governor Gavin Newsom
cc: CCI Maldonado, CDCR

Dear Sirs:

I have been a member of Ananda since the mid 1980's. I practice Kriya Yoga Meditation and am an Ananda minister. I have lived in and been a teacher most of those years in Berkeley, Ananda India, Ananda Palo Alto, and now in Ananda Village of Nevada City. No matter where I have lived as a member of Ananda I am always struck by members' kindness and concern for others and motivation to grow in joyful service and respect for others. These very qualities are strongly exemplified in the history of Joe Hunt, even in prison, as I will mention, even though I have not personally met him. (I have many close friends who have.)

I first heard about Joe Hunt while I lived in Palo Alto and attended Ananda Church of Self Realization. He was transiting through a holding cell situation on his way through Palo Alto to another Jail. Having just read The Autobiography of a Yogi by Paramhansa Yogananda, Joe was interested in learning meditation so he requested a visit by someone from Ananda Church. One of the head ministers went to meet him and the relationship with Ananda began. That minister shared the story with us. All I have heard since then has only increased my respect for him and his ability to practice humble respect with fellow inmates and prison staff, sometimes in difficult situations.

Ananda friends I know who have met with Joe, some repeatedly, have only admiration for how he has been able to calm situations and turn negative ones around for the better. He is respected by prison staff and inmates alike. Particularly he has worked diligently doing research that has helped other inmates be able to leave prison earlier than their full term. His ability to feel joy in helping others leave although he has stayed is a selfless quality that is needed everywhere today. His ability to expand in his own meditation practice in jail and teach meditation to those who request it is exceptional.

Now, with physical ailments mounting from the 35 years in a jail environment, would be an excellent time to release this man who has helped so many personnel and inmates in so many ways. There are so many in the Ananda Community alone who have visited him frequently and so much support for his freedom now and here. I would be more than happy to enable Joe's steps towards outer freedom... fulfilling the freedom he has found within himself and given to so many.

Please feel free to contact me at 650-388-8112 with any questions or requests for helping Joe Hunt to come home where he has so many friends and people willing to help with his transition home. Thank you for considering the commutation of the prison sentence of this great soul.

Sincerely,


[REDACTED]

Pamela Peterson

[REDACTED]



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

Fabio Nani


August 12 2020

To: Governor Gavin Newsom
cc: CC1 Maldonado, CDCR

Hello, my name is Fabio Nani. I'm a minister and private teacher at a spiritual community in northern California called Ananda Village. I'm originally from Switzerland, but I've lived for the past 14 years in California, after marrying my wife Sharon, who is from San Francisco.

Even though I've never personally met Joe Hunt, I've become aware of him through some very close friends of mine who've been visiting him over the years. Through them I learned that Joe Hunt has spent most of his time in prison being a friend and helping other inmates getting paroled. These friends of mine who keep Joe Hunt in such high esteem, are people who have given their lives to serving, inspiring, and uplifting people all over the globe. Day after day, I see embodied in their lives the highest moral and spiritual principles, and I trust them implicitly. And, through their integrity, I trust Joe Hunt. Honestly, in my heart he feels like a friend to me, and I look forward to meeting him in person.

I heard amazing stories of how Joe Hunt has been of help and support to many inmates, and a source of inspiration to all, including guards and chapelains. Even though he was sentenced without possibility of parole, he didn't become bitter. He actively helped other inmates to apply and obtain parole. Those close to him can testify to the positive influence and inspiration they receive from his presence.

I believe that after 35 years in prison, Joe deserves to be released for integration back into the community. With his irreprehensible conduct demonstrated over decades, Joe Hunt is showing not only to be worthy of parole, but to be a bright asset to the community that will be lucky enough to host him. In a world where so many look only at their own personal interest, here's someone who, in spite of his many challenges, has been able to stay open, positive, and to help other people with their own challenges. Our spiritual community would be really happy to welcome Joe in our midst. I really hope this can become a reality!

Thank you for reading my letter in support of Joe Hunt. If you wish to follow up with me with any question regarding any of my statements, please feel free to contact me via cellphone at [REDACTED], or via email at [REDACTED].

Best regards,

[REDACTED]

Fabio Nani



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

To: Governor Gavin Newsom
Cc: CC1 Maldonado, CDCR

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

I have been aware of Joe's incarceration story since the late 1980s when he contacted our Ananda Church and community in Palo Alto for spiritual counselling and instruction. Many of my colleagues and friends have visited him over the years in prison and have always come back feeling uplifted and inspired from being in his presence.

In addition, I have gotten to know him indirectly through my interactions his sister, brother-in-law and niece, Catherine, Michael and Kelly Olivier, who have been wonderfully serviceful members of our congregation for years. The stories of their interactions with him have supported my conviction that he should be released.

I do not know of my own knowledge if Joe Hunt is guilty or not guilty of the crime of which he is accused, but from following his case over decades, it seems that Joe, now age 60, has been caught up for over 35 years in a legal situation that is not fair.

Here are some of his accomplishments:

He has helped fellow inmates with health and legal issues

He co-founded the first men's group in a California prison

He has been exemplary in maintaining a zero-violence record while in some of the most dangerous prisons in California, putting him in the top 1% of inmates


Also, he recently developed cardiomyopathy and is at **high-risk for COVID-19**

For all the above reasons, I believe that Joe is a very strong candidate for commutation. If he is released, he would be welcome in any one of our Ananda spiritual communities. He has much experience and wisdom to share.

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

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

Sincerely,


Ananda Church of Self-Realization
Lightbearer, Minister



Date: 8/13/20

Printed Name: Roger Kent Reed

Phone Number:

Email Address:

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

Sharon Lester
2020

August 17,

[REDACTED]

To: Governor Gavin Newsom
Cc: CC1 Maldonado , CDCR

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

I first became acquainted with Joe, 32 years ago, while living in Palo Alto, California. Very good friends of mine visited him often and I have followed his life ever since.

At the time I first "met" Joe through my friends, I was working at an environmental consulting firm in San Jose. However, success and money did not satisfy me, so I began a search for a deeper spiritual purpose to life. My friends of Joe are the lifelong friends I have made that shared my dream. Together, we created the Ananda Community in Mountain View, California.

In the years that followed I have helped manage East West Bookshop in Mountain View, served at the co-Spiritual Director of Ananda Sacramento in Rancho Cordova, California, and now reside at Ananda Village in Nevada City, California, where I serve as a minister and help in managing the day to day activities of the community here.

Joe became a deep friend to Ananda members worldwide, because to survive his years in prison, he has had to come to a deep peace in himself. A transcendent peace that most can only imagine. I strive to experience his depth of goodness and wellbeing, and share as he has done in his daily setting of fear and violence. The selfless kindness and generosity Joe has given to his fellow inmates has awakened hope and self-respect among the most forgotten of society.

Though he serves an obvious benefit within the prison system of being a true warrior for peace, 35 years is enough. His hundreds of friends are longing to welcome him home to free air and our loving support for his transition.

Thank you for allowing me to write on Joe's behalf. If you have any further questions of me, I would be glad to follow up with anything I have said. My work phone is ([REDACTED] [REDACTED]), or you can reach me by email at [REDACTED].

And thank you for your work on this application. Though I know you will receive many, many letters from his friends, they barely scratch the surface of our love and admiration for Joe.

Warmest Regards,

([REDACTED])

Sharon Lester



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

August 10th 2020

To Governor Gavin Newson
cc: C1 Maldonado, CDRC

Dear Governor Sir Gavin Newston.


I have heart about Joe Hunt, his situation and about him as a person from Jyotish and Devi Nowak, the Directors of Ananda Church of Self-Realization. Being one of the international members, from Germany, of cause I know and love them. But they are also international well known and respected. They have received the " Global Ambassador Peace Award" at the United Nations Church Center in 2017 from the IISD (Institute for International Social Development). At this occasion they said, "Only with an uplifted consciousness will we achieve sustainable living and harmony on our planet."

I have been working as a qualified nurse in clinics for Psychosomatic most of my life before retirement. I am deeply convinced that we as humans have the capacity to change ourselves, uplift our consciousness. This conviction is based on my experience. That is why, when I hear about Joe Hunt and how he had developed such a positive attitude and behavior, I believe it. I saw it happen in my work with young people with Borderline disease and all what may come along with it. These changes took place especially, when people opened their hearts to the possibility of the existence of a higher power, something greater than we, which runs the universe, a power which allows us access to itself, calling it Father or God.

That is why I would like to ask you if you could give Joe Hunt commutation of the prison sentence. It fully looks like the purpose of the incarceration is fulfilled and a man won back for living in mutual service and respect in the society. This is something I want to say Thank you for and I would ask your thoughtful consideration and compassion for his release from prison.

Sincerely respectful,


Sabine Kaphingst


Sabine Kaphingst



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

To: Governor Gavin Newsom

Cc: CC1 Maldonado, CDCR

My name is Saiganesh and I am minister and one of the co-managers of the Ananda Church of Self Realization, Palo Alto. I have been serving a congregation of over 300 people as a teacher, minister and counselor for over 5 years.

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

I 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.

Joe 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. It does not serve society to keep Joe locked up -- it just wastes taxpayer money.

I believe, for these reasons, that Joe is a very strong candidate for commutation. If he is released, **he would be welcomed with wide open arms by our Ananda spiritual community.** Would you please give him a chance to be considered by the parole board for release? Thank you for your kind consideration. I can be reached via the below contact information if you need to do so for any reason.

Sincerely,

[Redacted Signature]

Date: 8/14/20

Printed Name: [Redacted]

Phone Number: [Redacted]

Email Address: [Redacted]



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

August 10, 2020

To: Governor Gavin Newsom
CC: Maldonado, CDCR

From: Jane N. Simpson, Citizen in good standing of California since 1978, 1 [REDACTED]

Dear Governor Newsom,

I am writing to urge you to approve my friend, Joe Hunt's (D61863) petition for commutation of sentence. Joe has spent close to 35 years in custody! Thirty-five years in prison is surely *enough* for this kind of person!

Joe was only 24 years old when he was arrested. He is now 60. I know that, without question, his conduct in prison, for all these years, has been exemplary. All this time, Joe has devoted himself to a peaceful life and to helping others. Surely a statement like this can be said to describe only a very few prisoners in California! And yet, I am certain that his prison record shows this to be true!

In my opinion, Joe is surely one of the strongest candidates for redemption in California, at this time. Please let his example of continuing good conduct and non-violence serve as the basis for his release at the earliest possible time. I cannot begin to imagine another prisoner in the California prison system now who deserves a such timely release more!

In addition, I have heard from his family that his physical health is deteriorating now (he has been diagnosed with heart failure). This is a situation with which I resonate completely. I was diagnosed with heart disease a year ago (severe coronary artery disease). So I also am living now under a similar sort of "death sentence."

Therefore, I respectfully make this request. Why not let Joe spend whatever time he has remaining in the company of his wife, family, and dear friends? I can think of no reason at all, and I sincerely ask and pray for your agreement in this matter.

Yours truly,

[REDACTED]
Jane N. Simpson



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

To: Governor Gavin Newsom
Cc: CC1 Maldonado, CDCR

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

I have been aware of Joe's incarceration story since 1988 when he contacted our Ananda Church and community in Palo Alto for spiritual counselling and instruction. Many of my colleagues and friends have visited him over the years in prison and have always come back reporting how uplifted and inspired they felt in his presence. In addition, I have gotten to know him indirectly through my interactions his family members, specifically his sister, brother-in-law and niece, Catherine, Michael and Kelly Olivier, who have been wonderful serviceful members of our congregation for years.

I cannot speak as to whether Joe Hunt is guilty or not guilty of the crime of which he is accused, but based my careful reading of the FreeJoeHunt.com, it seems that Joe, now age 60, has been caught up for over 35 years in a legal situation that does not appear to be fair. Moreover, I believe that even if he is guilty of this crime, he has more than "paid his debt to society." Here are some of his accomplishments:

He has helped fellow inmates with health and legal issues

He co-founded the first men's group in a California prison

He has been exemplary in maintaining 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**

I believe, for these reasons, that Joe is a very strong candidate for commutation. If he is released, he would be welcome in any one of our Ananda spiritual communities and would no doubt become a contributory member of our church. He has much experience and wisdom to share.

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

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

Sincerely,


Ananda Church of Self-Realization
Lightbearer, Minister



Date: 8/13/20 8/13/20

Printed Name: Sita C. Reed

Phone Number: 

Email Address: 



Ananda

CHURCH OF SELF-REALIZATION of Nevada County

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

To Governor Gavin Newsom,
cc: CC1 Maldonado, CDCR

13 August 2020

Dear friends,

I am a minister for Ananda Church of Self Realization, a world-wide religious work, since 1998. I have lived at Ananda Village in Nevada City, California, since 1984, with a 3-year-gap from 1998-2001, during which time I and my family served at our Ananda Portland Community and Church in Portland, Oregon.

Our religious teachings focus on meditation and service. We strive to put God first before material wealth and worldly comforts. I have birthed and raised four sons at rural Ananda Village, all whom now live in various cities on the West Coast, USA; these men are stable, contributing, conscious, aware adults.

I do not know Joe Hunt personally. Yet I have heard about him and his story for decades. Through this connection I have felt personally associated with him, like having a dear friend who lives afar. I have always trusted that our leading Ananda representatives and ministers would serve in the role of support for Joe Hunt, which is the reason I never made an effort to visit him in person. However, I have read his writings, prayed for his many struggles, and admired his ever-present, calm non-attachment to the very difficult situations with which he regularly found himself presented.

I should rephrase that simple expression of having admired Joe. I have been *inspired* by Joe Hunt. For a man to dedicate himself to advanced spiritual teachings, to practice them regularly in such difficult circumstances, to be a constant inspiration to his fellow inmates and prison staff – yes, I am deeply inspired by this man. The spiritual path is not easy! It is one of constant effort to accept what is, to deepen one's love of God no matter the circumstances.

There is a story I now recall from India. A man decided to enter a holy religious ashram at a young age. Ready to follow the path of renunciation and the teachings of his guru (spiritual teacher) the student asked for his daily work. The guru asked him to bring water every day for the sustenance of the spiritual adherents. The spiritual student did this for years. Years turned into decades. When dipping his bucket in the water one day he looked at his reflection and saw his own fully grey beard and hair. Suddenly he realized, "I am an old man! I have spent my entire life hauling water and I have never found God!" Just then a tear trickled down his cheek. Suddenly the guru appeared at his side, hand outstretched to catch the man's tear. The guru simply said, "If the tear of a Spiritually Realized Person, such as yourself, falls to the ground there will be famine on earth for a generation."

The spiritual aspirant in the story had given his entire life to hauling water. He never questioned, he simply did that which was put before him. He didn't judge, he didn't whine, he simply served. He found spiritual self-realization on his Path to God. This is how I see Joe Hunt, a man who has



Ananda

CHURCH OF SELF-REALIZATION of Nevada County

“hailed water” his entire adult life while living in the confines of prison. He has exemplified such spiritual advancement that he is a constant inspiration to us all. He also has similarly inspired many inmates and prison staff.

I look forward to meeting Joe Hunt in person. I know that we, who reside here at Ananda Cooperative Spiritual Community, over 200 adults and 20 children, will joyfully welcome Joe to live here. I know we as a community will ensure that he is housed and has gainful work. He would be a valued member of our community, welcomed by all.

I have heard that covid is presently a great danger in our prisons. With the costs to run prisons, and the intense health danger to inmates and staff, I believe it would be an excellent idea to release certain carefully selected prison candidates to live with family and qualified friends. Joe Hunt has already experienced some concerning health issues this year for which he did not want to seek a doctor due to being exposed to covid. As of August 12, 2020, I have read that the California prisons have 917 incarcerated persons with covid, and 1196 prison employees with covid. It seems to me that the solution now with respect to covid exposure in our California prisons is to maintain more social distance in order to protect the inmates and staff. Joe Hunt would be safe and well-cared-for with his spiritual family at Ananda Village in Nevada City, California.

Joe Hunt has paid his debt to society. I believe it is time he is released to his family and friends at Ananda Village in Northern California. Here he will find quality of life, immediate ways to serve in our community, many supportive friends, and opportunities to continue to grow as a person.

I would be very happy to speak to anyone who may have more questions for me.

Suzanne Betts



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

To: Governor Gavin Newsom

Cc: CC1 Maldonado, CDCR

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

I 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. It does not serve society to keep Joe locked up -- it just wastes taxpayer money.

I believe, for these reasons, that Joe is a very strong candidate for commutation. **If he is released, he would be welcomed with wide open arms by our Ananda spiritual community.** Would you please give him a chance to be considered by the parole board for release?

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

Sincerely,

[Redacted Signature] 2

Date: 8/16/2020

Printed Name: .

Phone Number

Email Address: [Redacted]



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

Susan Hoffert

[REDACTED]

August 4, 2020

To: Governor Gavin Newsom
Cc: CC1 Maldonado, CDCR

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

Allow me to briefly introduce myself. I have been a member of Ananda Church of Self-Realization of Palo Alto, California since 1995. In the last few years I have heard a lot about Joe Hunt and have met members of his family. I have been very impressed by the level of support Joe has received from church leaders that I highly respect.

I understand that Joe has been a model prisoner and praised by the guards.

Further I have heard that Joe is a regular meditator while in prison. I find meditation challenging in my quiet home so I find that remarkable.

I have heard stories about Joe's behavior in prison and how he has helped other inmates with information on how to reduce their sentence. I understand that since Joe has been in prison he has educated himself on the law and this information has been helpful to many.

Since Joe has already spent 35 years in prison I hope he can be released back into society where he can use his many gifts in the larger community.

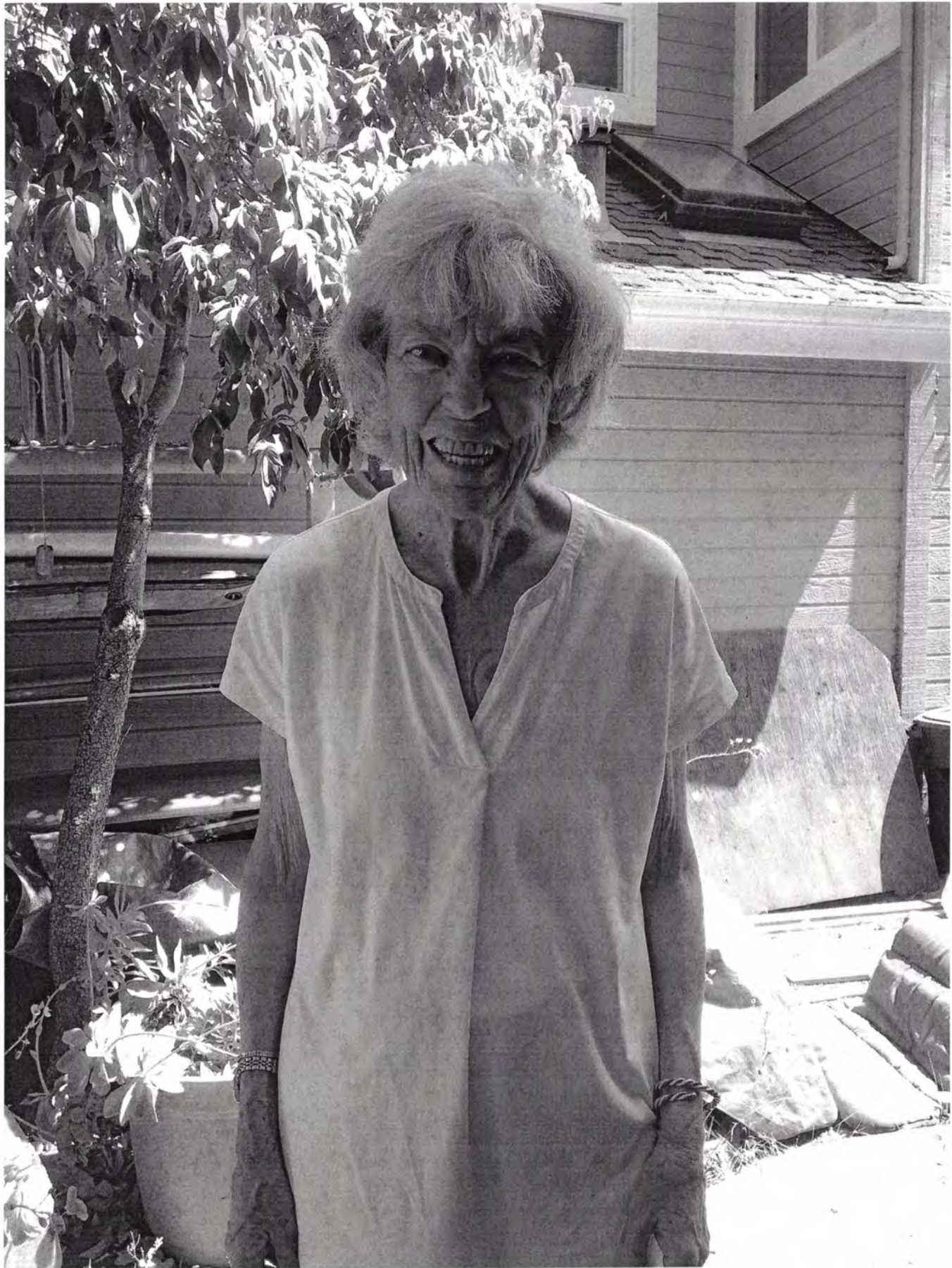
Thank you for reading my letter in support of Joe Hunt. Should you wish to follow up with any questions, I am happy to respond. I can be reached via my cell at [REDACTED] or via email at [REDACTED].

Thank you for considering this important matter.

Best regards,

[REDACTED]

Susan Hoffert



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

Stewart Motyka

[REDACTED] 7

August 11, 2020

To: Governor Gavin Newsom

Cc: CC1 Maldonado, CDCR

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

I have been a member of the Ananda Church of Self-Realization for over 40 years, of which Joe has been a member for many years as well.

Ananda is a world-wide work, based at Ananda Village, Nevada City, California.

The Ananda Church offers, through online classes and to guests that visit our Retreat centers, the spiritual teachings in the science of yoga.

I have heard, over the years, from our Ministers who have regularly visited Joe, that he follows a daily routine of meditation and the studying of the yoga science.

They also shared with us how Joe's actions and attitudes, while being incarcerated, have been a positive influence to many within prison; helping others in their personal lives, and gaining the trust of prison administration.

Based on all I've read about Joe on his website, and from our Ministers who have often visited him, I see that Joe has, in an exceptional way, lived up to:

"the standards set forth in California Penal Code section 4852.05, which states:"

"During the period of rehabilitation the person shall live an honest and upright life, shall conduct himself or herself with sobriety and industry, shall exhibit a good moral character, and shall conform to and obey the laws of the land."

Because Joe has more than fulfilled these set standards, and if his commutation application is accepted, we welcome him to live here with us at Ananda Village.

Sincerely,
Stewart Motyka

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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

14618 Tyler Foote Rd.
Nevada City, CA 95959
Aug 7, 2020

To: Governor Gavin Newsom

Cc: CC1 Maldonado, CDCR

Dear Sirs:

My name is Filomena Abbruzzese, I live in an international spiritual community called Ananda. First I lived 6 years at Ananda in Italy, I just spent 4 years in Ananda Village near Nevada City and soon I will move to Washington state still at Ananda.

Some of the core aspects of my life at Ananda are the practice of daily meditation, kindness and service to others, with the awareness that there is a higher potential in everyone that can be cultivated.

I am married and have a son. I come from a background in Architecture, but since I moved to this spiritual community my main service happily has been to teach yoga.

I never met Joe Hunt in person even though I consider him a friend. I learned about him from my spiritual guides who I deeply respect and trust and who have followed him since the beginning of his incarceration around 30 years ago.

About 3 years after joining the prison, Joe joined our congregation, learning meditation and faithfully practicing yoga teachings daily in search of self improvement in circumstances of tremendous difficulty of a prison. This is quite remarkable for me considering how hard usually is for people to stay loyal to their truth in normal circumstances.

Already for this reason alone, Joe has shown me to be an exceptional soul and he has gained all my respect.

Joe is described as a noble, generous, kind, willing to serve others by people in my congregation and inmates who knew him directly.

I have read with great interest the many letters written by other inmates who have crossed paths with Joe over the years and which share stories of profound personal transformation thanks to Joe's spiritual guidance and presence.

Joe, after studying law in jail, in his willingness to serve, helped many inmates legally (thanks to him, 16 of them are now rightly free from prison).

I know that many people at Ananda would welcome him with open arms.

I also believe that Joe, if he were to be released, is capable of supporting himself financially. He was capable from jail to raise a million dollar to build a temple for all religions and world upliftment. Another exceptional thing.

In 30 years he has been constantly shown a peaceful attitude, integrity to his spiritual life, caring and willing to help others.

Joe Hunt appears to me not only not to be a thread, but also to be a saintly human being.

For all these reasons I add my voice to ask for his release.

I think we need more souls like Joe Hunt in this world.

Thank you for your time in reading this letter, please do not hesitate to contact me for any question.

Sincerely,

Filomena Abbruzzese



August 10, 2020

This is in regards to Joe Hunt, D Dash 61863, governors commutation application

To Governor Gavin Newsom

Carbon copy to CCI Maldonado, capital CDCR

Dear Sirs,

My name is Victoria Hansen and I am a minister and community member of Ananda Sacramento Community in Rancho Cordova. My life here for the last 25 years has been based on meditation and serving others.

I am writing to support and appeal for the petition and the release of Joe Hunt who was just 24 years old when found guilty of a crime that he didn't commit. In 1984 he was sentenced to life in prison without parole. Though he's appealed his sentence many times this innocent man has spent his entire adult life behind bars.

Throughout the years where I have lived at Ananda I have heard many positive things about Joe Hunt from the main ministers and directors of Ananda. I highly revere these leaders the many years I have known them, especially since a number of them have become friends of Joe Hunt. The stories these ministers have shared throughout these years from their visits to Joe Hunt are so positive and inspiring. They describe how helpful he has been to his fellow prisoners as he counseled them in their difficulties.

Joe has spent approximately 35 years in custody. I am told that his conduct in prison has been an exemplary. This record of exemplary conduct for 35 years speaks volumes! Then there is the fact that most civilized countries parole after 20 years even for the most serious offenses. So, now we have come to a time where it is necessary to release some low-risk prisoners and I am asking that this be done for Joe Hunt who has been a model prisoner of great conduct.

Regarding the innocence of Joe Hunt, I have this to ask: if the prosecutor of his trial was correct, he directed another man to kill the conman Ronald Levine. Joe Hunt is not even alleged to be the actual killer. Plus, as I understand it, the nature and the amount of evidence that came to light after Joe Hunt's conviction deserves a compassionate reconsideration of this request to commute his sentence.

As a very honest and just person I cannot fathom why Joe Hunt would not be considered for parole at this time! He has served his time for something he didn't do, and taking his exemplary model record of conduct in prison for 35 years into account, it seems only fair that his sentence be commuted. On what basis can someone justify not releasing him? I ask you and appeal to your higher self to consider his case in the highest way that you know how.

Most people at Ananda would welcome Joe hunt with open arms into their hearts, home and our greater community. It would be wonderful to have him among us

I would be very happy to speak with anyone who would like to question me.

Very sincerely yours,



Victoria Hansen



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

Richard W. Marshall

[REDACTED]

August 8, 2020

To: Governor Gavin Newsome

Cc: CC1 Maldonado, CDCR

Dear Governor Newsome:

Early in my career, I was a CPA. As my life progressed, I more and more realized that teaching is the best thing for me to be doing. So, most recently, I taught math at Portland Community College for 15 years and retired in 2016. Currently, I'm teaching basic math to adults (via Zoom) for the Mid-Valley Literacy Center in Salem, Oregon.

I have become aware of Joe Hunt through the testimony and writings of long-time friends of mine who have visited him, and become his friends.

I joined Ananda in Seattle in 1992 and lived at Ananda Village outside Nevada City for five years in the late 1990s. During that time, I developed strong friendships with several of the Ananda people who have been visiting Mr. Hunt. These Ananda people who have been visiting Mr. Hunt are among the very finest people I know -- each of them. I have no doubt whatsoever about the truth of what they are relating as to what a fine man Mr. Hunt has become.

Mr. Hunt has made a strong positive impact on my life. He's showing me the heights to which a mortal can soar given strong, nurtured attunement with God. He's demonstrating unquenchable human spirit despite having been incarcerated for more than thirty years. I find the value he has made of his life almost unbelievable for anybody having been imprisoned for such a long time.

I feel very confident that, were he to be released, he'd make a very positive impact wherever he chose to live and be a constructive and desirable influence on people he came in contact with. After hearing the story of him being instrumental in raising a million dollars for Ananda's new Temple, I'm confident he'll be able to support himself after his release too. Bottom line: it just seems to me that Mr. Hunt as he is right now truly belongs outside prison walls to have the freedom to be a very constructive member of society.

Were he to be released, I feel completely confident that he'd be welcomed to live at Ananda Village outside Nevada City, or at another Ananda community here on the west coast (Palo Alto, Rancho Cordova, Portland or Seattle.) I have lived in, and have close ties with the communities in Portland and Seattle, and am very familiar with the community in Rancho Cordova too.

If you would like any further information or clarification, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Very truly yours,

A large rectangular grey box redacting the signature of Richard W. Marshall. A handwritten mark, possibly a flourish or initials, is visible above the box.

Richard W. Marshall

A small rectangular grey box redacting contact information, likely a phone number or email address.



Richard W. Marshall