

URGENT REQUEST FOR LETTERS OF SUPPORT
Support the Clemency Petition of Patrick Johnson



Patrick Johnson was incarcerated when he was 23 years old and sentenced to life without parole. He is now 51 years old and has been in prison for over 27 years. Patrick was convicted of murder under accountability theory, meaning that he did not commit the murders himself but is legally culpable for the actions of his co-defendant. In Patrick's case, his co-defendant was his extremely abusive ex-boyfriend, Reinald "Rey" Travieso. Rey brutally murdered a family of three because one of them owed him money related to dealing drugs. The victims in the case included an infant child, and their deaths were unspeakably tragic. At the time of the murders, Patrick cowered in a corner, terrified that he was also going to be killed. However, compulsion is not a defense to first-degree murder.

Patrick was sexually molested in his home starting around the age of 11. In 1985, when Patrick was 17 years old, he met Rey, who was 35 years old at the time. Patrick, who is a transgender man, had not yet transitioned. At the time, he presented as a young woman and was known by his legal name, Patricia. Rey pursued Patrick and charmed him with expensive meals and gifts. Patrick was impressed by the display of wealth and affection, but also eager to escape abuse at home. After only a few weeks, he moved in with Rey.

Patrick soon learned that Rey was a drug dealer and had a violent temper. Throughout the next seven years, Reinald abused Patrick regularly. His abuse of Patrick included violent beatings as well as brutal sexual assaults. On several occasions, Patrick ran away and stayed with family or friends, but Rey always found him and beat him severely. Rey also introduced Patrick to cocaine, and Patrick quickly developed an addiction. Rey then regularly manipulated Patrick's access to and use of drugs, a type of abuse now recognized as Substance Use Coercion. Although Patrick wanted to end the relationship, Rey would not allow Patrick to escape him. At some point, Rey discovered that Patrick had started dating women, and this only increased Rey's abuse and efforts to control Patrick.

After the murders, Rey promised Patrick that he would kill him and members of his family if he ever told the police what happened. Patrick has great remorse that he did not overcome his fear of Rey and report what happened to the police. Over the next several months, Rey beat Patrick and kept him in their apartment against his will. He also kept Patrick so high on drugs that he was constantly in a stupor, unable to communicate. Once, Patrick almost died of an overdose and had to be rushed to Edgewater hospital. When they were finally arrested, Patrick signed a statement against Rey. Being in jail was the first time in years that Patrick felt safe from Rey.

At trial, the prosecution alleged that Patrick assisted Rey in taking money and jewelry from the victims and in later pawning the jewelry to buy drugs. Under Illinois law, a person can be convicted under accountability theory if they assist the person who commits the crime. Furthermore, a person who is convicted under accountability theory is convicted of the same crime and serves the same sentence as the principal. Thus, Patrick is serving the same sentence—life without parole—as Reinald Travieso.

Patrick's Clemency Petition

Patrick's attorneys are asking Governor Pritzker to show mercy to Patrick by commuting his sentence to time served. Patrick has exhausted all other legal remedies. Therefore, executive clemency is Patrick's last chance for a sentence reduction.

Patrick takes full responsibility for the role that he played in the tragic murders of the victims, as well as for his drug addiction. However, Patrick has been a model prisoner during his 27 years behind bars. Patrick's attorneys are arguing that he has served enough time.

How to Write a Letter of Support

Letters of support can help to show the Governor that the general public believes that a commutation is appropriately merciful in this case. Letters of support can be from individuals or from organizations.

What to include in your letter:

- Address your letter** to Governor J. B. Pritzker, 100 W. Randolph St., Chicago, IL 60601. Open your letter with, "Dear Governor Pritzker."
- State clearly that **you are writing in support of Patrick Johnson's immediate release, or that your support his commutation to time served.**
- If you want, you can briefly share **information about yourself** such as your profession, if there is something that personally moves you about this case, or if you have personal or professional experience with the issues that Patrick has dealt with in his life.
- In your own words, very briefly explain **what you understand about Patrick's case**, so that it is clear that you are familiar with the basic facts of the case. Just briefly!
- Explain **why you think Patrick should be released**. You can also say if there's any reason why you feel personally moved by his story.
- Sign your letter and include your address**. Your address is included to verify your identity (i.e., that you are a real person), and may also show that you are a potential voter in Illinois.

More tips: It's okay for the letter to be handwritten, but please write legibly. Letters from the general public are usually kept to one page in length. You can still write a letter even if you do not live in Illinois. More than one person or organization can sign the same letter but please include your addresses. More importantly: Write from the heart, and don't overthink it!

SEND IT!

Letters received **before** midnight on January 20th, 2020, can be included in the petition itself. If you can get it here in time, please email it to RachelWhiteDomain@cqla.net or mail it to...

Attorney Rachel White-Domain
Cabrini Green Legal Aid
6 S. Clark St., Suite 200
Chicago, IL 60603

After Monday January 20th, 2020, letters can be mailed directly to Governor J.B. Pritzker at: 100 W. Randolph St., Chicago, IL 60601.