

April 30, 2020

The Honorable Michael L. Parson
Governor of Missouri
P.O. Box 720
Jefferson City, MO 65102

Dear Governor Parson:

We, the undersigned, urge you to use your constitutional authority to grant Patricia “Patty” Prewitt clemency and release her from prison. We understand that your staff has been given the details about Prewitt’s legal case as well as her exemplary record during the over 34 years she has spent in prison. From both sides of the aisle and an array of constituencies, compelling arguments have been made in favor of clemency. We highlight the following:

- **A Flawed Investigation and Trial Led to Conviction:** Prewitt was arrested after a hasty investigation in which leads were ignored and key evidence not collected from the crime scene. Such “tunnel vision” exhibited by investigators has been found to be a leading cause of wrongful convictions. At trial, the prosecution relied on a discredited forensic expert and sexist attacks on Patty’s character to move the jury. In addition to advocacy from legal experts and the Midwest Innocence Project, the case has attracted national attention from a number of journalists and media outlets who have also explored the case, recognizing the dubious nature of the investigation and the evidence presented at trial.
- **The Prewitt Children’s Strong Support for Clemency:** The Prewitt children lost their father as a result of the crime for which their mother was convicted. Their eldest, Jane Prewitt Watkins, described the murder of her father and the conviction of her mother as a “double tragedy” that orphaned her and her siblings. Today, the four living Prewitt children and the many Prewitt grandchildren pray for the release of their mother and will ensure her successful reentry. As Watkins writes, “My husband and I have a bedroom waiting for her. Our family will provide her all the support she needs to be a productive member of our community rather than a burden on Missouri taxpayers as a prisoner.”
- **Prewitt’s Exemplary Record and Service to Others Over Three Decades in Prison:** Patty has availed herself of countless opportunities for personal growth during her time in prison, earning an associate’s degree, a business diploma, fitness teaching certificates, and more. She served the state as a computer programmer for over 20 years, participates in religious activities such as Resident Encounter Christ, enthusiastically engages in volunteer work and Restorative Justice Projects, and has been a long-time leader in Prison Performing Arts. More importantly, she has mentored generations of women behind bars, many of whom now live productive lives on the outside. As one former inmate writes, “I know unequivocally that I never would have found my way back to

fully valuing myself had it not been for Patty's influence and belief in me when I was struggling."

- **After 34 Years Prewitt's Continued Incarceration Is Not in the State's Interest:** Now nearing 70 years old, Patty Prewitt has been in prison since 1986. The state has spent hundreds of thousands of dollars to keep Prewitt behind bars and these costs will rise as she ages and her health care needs grow. We believe it is wiser to spend taxpayer money on efforts to prevent crime and reduce recidivism.

In light of the above, we ask that you take, as former Department of Corrections Director George Lombardi has urged, "the just, responsible and compassionate action and grant Patty Prewitt clemency."

Rep. LaDonna Appelbaum

Rep. Dottie Bailey

Rep. Gretchen Bangert

Rep. Donna Baringer

Rep. Jerome Barnes

Rep. Doug Beck

Rep. Rusty Black

Rep. Ashley Bland Manlove

Rep. LaKeySha Bosley

Rep. Paula Brown

Rep. Ingrid Burnett

Rep. Steve Butz

Rep. Jon Carpenter

Rep. Phil Christofanelli

Sen. Mike Cierpiot

Rep. Doug Clemens

Rep. Jeff Coleman

Rep. Mary Elizabeth Coleman

Rep. Bruce DeGroot

Rep. Shamed Dogan

Rep. Travis Fitzwater

Rep. Alan Gray

Rep. Trish Gunby

Rep. Kent Haden

Rep. Tom Hannegan

Rep. Steve Helms

Rep. Keri Ingle

Rep. Kip Kendrick

Rep. Deb Lavender

Rep. Tony Lovasco

Rep. Ian Mackey

Sen. Karla May

Rep. Tracy McCreery

Rep. Andrew McDaniel

Rep. Peter Merideth

Rep. Gina Mitten

Rep. Judy Morgan

Rep. Lynn Morris

Rep. Jim Murphy

Rep. Jim Neely

Rep. Rev. Tommie Pierson Jr.

Rep. Crystal Quade

Rep. Doug Richey

Sen. John Rizzo

Rep. Holly Rehder

Rep. Steven Roberts

Rep. Rory Rowland

Rep. Adam Schnelting

Sen. Jill Schupp

Rep. Martha Stevens

Rep. Cheri Toalson Reisch

Rep. Sarah Unsicker

Sen. Gina Walsh

Rep. Barbara Washington

Sen. Brian Williams

Rep. Yolanda Young