

Megan Gustafson on behalf
of the Young Democrats of Washington
P.O. Box 4642
Seattle, WA 98194

January 7, 2010
Re: Barry Massey

Dear Governor Gregoire,

The Washington State Young Democrats write to you asking for mercy on behalf of Barry Massey, who in 1988 was sentenced to life without parole for a crime committed when he was thirteen years old. Before he was sentenced, two separate psychological evaluations revealed his mental age to be 9.9 years. Known forensic evidence at the crime scene pointed to another person as the principal actor. Barry's own confession was inconsistent with the crime scene facts and called "unreliable" by the prosecution. Yet, despite all of this and more, our judicial system gave Barry no hope of redemption, treating him as if he fully understood the gravity of the crime and was beyond rehabilitation. Hurling him from the juvenile justice system straight into the Department of Corrections, he sat as a child in solitary confinement for the first few months of his sentence, and ultimately was placed in the general population with adult prisoners at the age of 15.

As of January 2010, Barry will have served twenty-three years in prison. Despite his extraordinary circumstances, he has remained infraction free for the last *thirteen* years. He has organized and participated in youth programs designed to steer young people away from fates similar to his own. He is a loving husband, focused on the needs of his wife, step-children and extended family. Thirteen current and former Department of Corrections Officers have written in support of his clemency request, and two testified at his 2006 Clemency & Pardons Board hearing. He has pursued all Department of Corrections programming available to him, and has completed an additional outside certification program.

If allowed to continue, this injustice undermines the integrity of the rule of law in the State of Washington. The urgency of the situation requires you to transcend political considerations to restore dignity and fairness. The power and responsibility to rectify this injustice rests solely upon your shoulders. We call upon you to grant clemency to Barry Massey in the spirit of mercy and reconciliation that undergirds our progressive philosophy and lend credence to our Democratic values. We look forward to your immediate action and the swift resolution of this case.

Regards,



Megan Gustafson
President Young Democrats of Washington State
On behalf of the Membership