



Oregon

Kate Brown, Governor

Oregon Department of Corrections

Correctional Services Division

2575 Center Street NE

Salem, OR 97301-4667

Voice: 503-945-0927

Fax: 503-373-1173



June 17, 2021

Venetia Mayhew
Attorney at Law
333 SW Taylor St. 300
Portland, OR 97204

SUBJECT: Hedquist, Kyle SID 11230424

To Ms. Mayhew,

At your request, I am writing to provide you with some background on Mr. Hedquist's work and program participation as well as conduct history while in the Oregon Department of Corrections' (DOC) custody.

Since arriving in DOC custody on 06/15/1995, Mr. Hedquist has continued his education by participating and completing work based education courses such as Hospice Vocational Training, Critical Thinking and Stress Management, Cognitive Self Change, Inside-Out University of Oregon college courses, Chinese Philosophy, Environmental Justice, Restorative Justice, Communication Workshop Sociology, Club Leadership and Another Chance at Education. Mr. Hedquist has also completed many different Inside-Out University of Oregon college courses and is currently enrolled in Philosophy 102 through University of Oregon.

University of Oregon's Inside Out Prison Exchange Class on Restorative Justice is held inside Oregon State Penitentiary (OSP) with 15 "inside" and 15 "outside" students. It was a transforming learning experience that emphasized collaboration and dialogue, while inviting students to address crime, justice, and other issues of social concern.

Previously I was an instructor for University of Oregon's Inside out Prison Exchange class and Mahmoud was one of the most engaged students I've had in the class. He possesses a winning combination of curiosity, critical thinking, and communication skills. He shared his ideas and suggestions and listened to others' feedback and responses. He was open to having his idea challenged and I watched his opinions and thought processes evolve over the course.

A program coordinator at University of Oregon states, "Kyle Hedquist has been a backbone of our leadership group supporting educational efforts on the inside. Not only has he been an excellent member of multiple classes, but he has also offered wisdom and strategic insight to creating new programs and recruiting more participants. He is in large part to thank for us expanding our reach to hundreds of additional inside participants each year. Kyle Hedquist is an exceptional student to have in our Inside-Out classes. He is not only an intelligent, committed, creative student in his own right; he also works to make the classroom a successful and welcoming space for others. Our "outside" students from the UO campus frequently remark on his efforts to make them feel comfortable in the class and encouraging them to share their ideas in small group conversations. We also observe the impact he has on fellow inside students. He is encouraging, shares resources, and pushes people to continue with their educational efforts, even if it feels intimidating. He has a cool head and works hard to overcome

obstacles and resolve conflicts. We believe he would thrive in on-campus UO classes or whatever else he puts his mind to."

Mr. Hedquist's religious services file begins in 2002 and he has remained extremely consistent in religious services programming from 2002 to present. Mr. Hedquist has participated in many different religious services programs and events such as Restorative Justice Meaning Making Stories, Anger Management, and Restorative Justice special events.

A chaplain at Mr. Hedquist's institution states, "Kyle Hedquist has been an active member of the Protestant community here at OSP for many years. He has contributed meaningful testimonials and community support in that role. Additionally, he has collaborated through Activities club fundraisers to raise capital for special events in the chapel and assist in updating materials. He has been a Hospice volunteer since February of 2016. In this role he has attended monthly trainings (as well as a 32-hour initial training) and he has assisted with keeping meeting minutes and resourcing the Infirmary for patient needs in collaboration with the Lifers' club. Mr. Hedquist is a very skilled, responsible, and resourceful member of any community to which he belongs. He is good at assessing challenges and coming up with innovative responses that meet both community and institutional needs. He has demonstrated care for, and interest in, all those with whom he comes in contact, staff, and AIC alike. I look forward to seeing what Mr. Hedquist will invent for the larger community to which he returns."

Mr. Hedquist has also sought self-improvement and preparation for successful reintegration into their family and community through successful participation in and completion of DOC programs and activities such as Multi-College Club Group, University of Oregon Common Reading, juvenile Delinquency class, Lifers presents Domestic Violence Prevention, Alternative to Violence Program, Lifers Book Club, and Building Thinking Power, Parenting Coordinator, Toastmasters, Power of Ideas, Why Evil Exists, Blueprint to Success, and Phoenix Rising.

Mr. Hedquist is currently enrolled in several productive programs, classes, and activities. Toastmasters Club where he is also a facilitator for the Education Advance Debate Class, 7 Step meetings, Ground Beneath Us class, Grief Group, Lifers Club, Cage your Rage, and Pathfinders. and Hospice Volunteer. He also has a letter indicating he was awarded a scholarship for the University of Oregon Prison Education Program for the summer of 2021 to enroll in Political Science Class- Democracy and Power in the Contemporary American Politics.

Mr. Hedquist has been employed most of his incarceration. Prior work assignments include working for Oregon Correction Enterprises (OCE) in their Landry, Furniture Factory, and Clerk. He has also worked in the Activity Department, Correctional Rehabilitation Services Living Well Program Aide, Infirmary, Upholstery Shop, Food Service, Hobby Shop, Metal Shop, Canteen, Physical Plant Plumbing, and several different clerk positions. Mr. Hedquist's current work assignment is in the OCE Call center where he has been employed since 2014. He has been the Lead Worker/Trainer since 2017. In addition, he is also employed with the Culinary Bake Shop being available when needed.

Mr. Hedquist received a minor misconduct in 2009 but has been major misconduct free since his arrival in DOC custody on 06/15/1995.

In conclusion, Mr. Hedquist has held several work positions and been involved in a multitude of productive programs, classes, and activities. He has taken classes and programs additional times and received awards and certificates. He plans to receive his Bachelor of Arts degree when released, as he

was not able to achieve this goal while incarcerated due to not meeting the DOC college degree criteria due to sentence length. Mr. Hedquist has maintained being the Toastmasters president for four years, Lifers club and 7-Step president for two years. Additionally, he has overseen the OSP Car Show twice as a fundraiser for Camp Agape. He was also the Alternative to Violence Program Coordinator. He was a great benefactor for his assistance in getting the children's outdoor play equipment for the OSP visiting area. Mr. Hedquist is known to be well sought after for his assistance on projects, which is noted by several staff. Furthermore, Mr. Hedquist has a re-entry plan for two possible counties of release that was reviewed by a Release Counselor and report that the plan looks well prepared and very viable if all the criteria is met.

Thank you for considering Mr. Hedquist for commutation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Nathaline Frener', with a stylized, cursive script.

Nathaline Frener
Assistant Director

Honorable Governor Kate Brown

900 Court St. NE

Salem, OR 97301-4047

Dear Governor Brown,

I am writing this letter on behalf of Kyle Hedquist, OSP# 11230424, who is asking to see the Parole Board. I have known Kyle since 1996.

My background includes earning graduate degrees in both Theology and Sociology. I worked for Los Angeles County as a Probation Officer for 7 years. We moved back to Oregon where I served a church in Eugene for about 2 years. Then I began working again with Oregon State Probation and Parole Dept. from 1980 to 1996. I made a change in 1996 when I was hired as a Prison Chaplain, where I remained until I retired in 2008. That is where I first met Kyle and I keep in touch with him even today.

Let me say right at the beginning of my letter, I know that once a person has killed another person they can never pay enough for that terrible crime. No matter what the person does he can never earn or deserve to be released from prison. It is only by your mercy and grace that Kyle can be allowed to see the Parole Board and it is only by their mercy and grace that he could be released from prison. Not because he has earned his release.

I don't know what was going on in Kyle's life when he killed Nikki Thrasher when he was seventeen years old. However I can say now, after supervising criminals for 25 years and serving as a prison Chaplain for 12 years, I have absolutely no hesitation in recommending Kyle to you as a person who has matured into a talented, humble, transparent person who is a man of integrity and high moral character. He is a responsible, caring adult who would make a significant contribution to society. He is certainly respected by prison staff and inmates alike.

In prison, Kyle is an excellent worker at the prison call center. He is faithful in attending chapel. He has primarily worked with the recreation department to make the prison a better place for the other inmates and assisted the prison staff in many ways. He has the ability to plan long term, recruit help from inmates and develop programs. Kyle has been president of a number of the clubs including the lifer's club, the toastmasters club, and setting up college debate programs. At this time he is president of the 7th Step Club to assist inmates who are being released from prison. He works hard to get people from the community to come in to prison and talk with the inmates in several of the different clubs. He is quite energetic and has made the most of his time in prison.

He has completed a ministerial program and has attend almost every college class offered when the U of Oregon, Oregon State or one of the other colleges come in to teach a college class with half of the class being inmates and the other half being students from the respective college. His grades are very good. He does quite well with college level material.

Kyle has also completed hospice training for a certified hospice worker. Presently he is not working as a hospice person, but gets up to the prison infirmary as much as he can to encourage the guys who are there.

I can't possibly mention all the things Kyle has done in the 27 years he has been in prison or all the programs he has attended and some he has taught, and things he has worked on with the prison staff and all the things he has organized with the other inmates, such as coordinating much of the annual car show at OSP. In prison he has become a person of integrity and is trusted by staff. When he says he will carry out a task or job it gets done. But again it is only by your grace that he can see the Parole Board or be released from prison. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Douglas Farris

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Douglas Farris".

Greetings,

I am writing this letter in support of Kyle Hedquist, SID #11230424 an Adult in Custody at the Oregon State Penitentiary. Prior to my retirement in 2018 I was the swing shift housing unit officer where Kyle was assigned. Assigned to housing unit A-3 is considered privileged. It has 98 inmates housed in one and two man cells. The center there is tables for studying and quiet work. Near the front exit there is an officer station and TV room with tables for games. The unit also has it's own showers that are open for use 6 am to 10 pm except during count times. Assignment to A-3 requires inmates to have clear conduct and measure 17 complaint.

Prior to being working in A-3 where Kyle is housed I met Kyle in the rising room where he would visit with his grandparents. That normally sat near the back officer's station where it was more quiet as his grandfather had hearing issues.

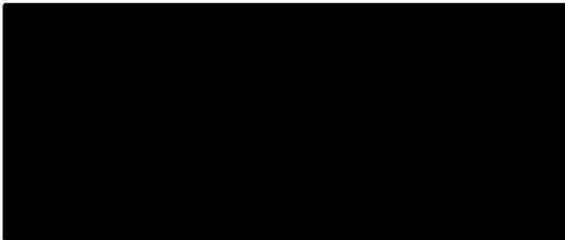
Kyle kept his cell clean and in good order. He interacted in a positive ways with other staff and AICs without regards to their age, race or sex. Kyle associates with people who work for a positive change. He has effective communication skills and is resourceful.

During his time at Oregon State Penitentiary he accepted responsibility for his crimes of robbery, kidnapping and murder. Kyle has matured to be a

responsible man. He is active on the Activities Floor and works to make life better for all the Adults in Custody. I feel that Kyle is remorseful of his actions and is a better man. I am without reservation when I say, Kyle has made improvements in his cognitive thinking and deserves an opportunity to be seen by the Parole Board.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Hickey', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Duston W. Hickey
Retired Correctional Officer



[REDACTED]

February 16, 2021

The Honorable Kate Brown
Governor, State of Oregon
Salem, Oregon

Dear Governor Brown:

My reason for writing is to plead for a commutation of sentence for Mr. Kyle Hedquist. Mr. Hedquist (SID 11230424) is serving a life without parole sentence and is currently at Oregon State Penitentiary in Salem.

I became acquainted with Mr. Hedquist during the time I served as a chapel volunteer at OSP and OSCI from 1997-2010. I first became acquainted with Mr. Hedquist at OSCI where he was a chapel clerk. Later on I visited Mr. Hedquist monthly at OSP when I would put him on a chapel call-out. I was consistently impressed with his positive attitude and work ethic at both OSCI and OSP.

During his incarceration at OSP in the early 2000's Mr. Hedquist served as an orderly in the infirmary, and then was part of the first group of inmates to be trained as hospice volunteers. One time I asked him why he was an infirmary orderly and a hospice volunteer, and he told me that while he didn't necessarily like all of his fellow inmates, they were nevertheless part of his family, and you take care of family when they are sick. Mr. Hedquist consistently demonstrated a desire to improve himself as well as make positive contributions to the other inmates and institution. During the time that I had personal contact with him, Kyle was always involved in a program or activity to do just that.

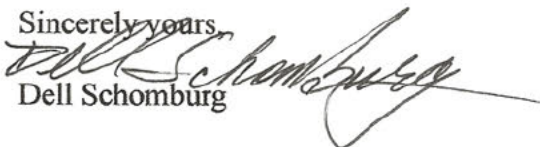
From 2002-2006 I served as a contract chaplain at Santiam and Mill Creek Correctional Facilities so my experience with inmates was also on that level in addition to that of a chapel volunteer. I believe myself to be a very good judge of character, and this is not the first time I have written a letter on behalf of Mr. Hedquist to a governor of Oregon. I also wrote letters to Governors Kulongoski and Kitzhaber.

Since moving to Vancouver, WA in 2015 I have maintained contact with Mr. Doug Farris, a retired chaplain from the Oregon Department of Corrections who has had on-going personal contact with Kyle. Chaplain Farris has told me how Kyle has continued to do whatever he can to improve life in OSP. From Chaplain Farris I also know that Kyle has developed positive relationships with staff and the OSP Administration.

It is my firm conviction that Mr. Hedquist will never pose a threat to himself or to any other member of the community. He is a different person than he was when he took a human life while he was in high school. I would not hesitate to live next door to Kyle in the community, so certain am I that he will never commit another crime for as long as he lives.

Therefore, I urge you to commute Mr. Hedquist's prison sentence before you leave office.

Sincerely yours,


Dell Schomburg

January 2021

Governor Kate Brown
Oregon Capital
Salem Oregon

Dear Governor Brown;

I am writing this letter in regards to an inmate in the Oregon prison system. I understand that very soon he is coming up for a parole evaluation. In past years I have written a letter in favor of an early release for Mr. Kyle Hedquist

I do so with knowledge of his behavior and wonderful performance within the Oregon prison system. In past years I visited with Kyle and was always challenged by his participation and activity within that system. He and I often had prayer together and sometimes I was his proctor as he studied for the ministry.

Mr. Hedquist was always involved with helping other inmates by encouragement and organizing programs for their betterment. He challenged those around him to become all that they could be even if incarcerated. His desire was to help the inmates become better people both in the prison community and one day, hopefully, in the outside world,

If I can be of any further assistance, do not fail to contact me. Even though I have not seen Kyle in some time we keep in touch, I believe that he is still a quality person and has a lot to offer.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "James R. Healy". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end.

Dr James R Healy
District Superintendent Retired
Church of the Nazarene
Reedsport, Oregon

Allen Dean Wylie, PharmD, RPh



February 9, 2021

Governor Kate Brown
Office of the Governor
900 Court St. NE, Suite 254
Salem, OR 97301-4047

Dear Governor Brown,

I am writing to ask you to please grant a meeting for Kyle Hedquist, SID #11230424, with the Oregon Board of Parole.

My wife and I did volunteer work at the Oregon State Penitentiary almost weekly before the Covid pandemic and got to know Kyle through that.

It is wonderful to see that a person can be rehabilitated and this has happened with Kyle. He is a great guy, very polite and respectful, and a leader. I do not see any bit of a criminal element in him.

Kyle would be a wonderful asset to any community. Whoever hires him for a job will be very fortunate to have him.

I personally would be comfortable around him at any time and he would always be welcome in my house with my wife and family.

Thank you very much for your consideration.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Allen D. Wylie".

Allen D. Wylie

Beverly Wylie



February 7, 2021

Governor Kate Brown
Office of the Governor
900 Court St. NE, Suite 254
Salem, OR 97301-4047

Dear Governor Brown,

I'm writing to ask that you grant Kyle Hedquist a meeting with the Oregon Board of Parole. My husband and I have gotten to know, admire, and respect Kyle through weekly church services at the Oregon State Penitentiary. I believe he is a good candidate for commutation. He's an example of what an inmate with a life-sentence can become with good educational opportunities and job training.

Kyle relates well to people. He is helpful and demonstrates understanding, patience and tolerance towards others. He has a zest for life, an enthusiasm and optimism that make the people around him smile. He is quite an encourager to the church congregation. He appears to be well-liked by all those around him (other inmates, prison officers, and volunteers). He has a good work ethic, and people appreciate that he does more than "his share." He has good ideas and works hard to put them into action with good results.

He is someone I would welcome to any of our family gatherings, and he would be well-liked by our family and extended family. Members of our family of all ages would be as safe with him as they would be with any of our other friends. In our social network, Kyle would be known as a good friend of ours. I would be confident recommending him for a job as someone who is trustworthy and ethical.

Thank you for considering my request to grant Kyle Hedquist a Parole Board hearing.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Beverly Wylie".

Beverly Wylie

Redeeming Grace Ministries

Pastor Tim Ralls

02/08/2021

Governor Kate Brown
900 Court St. Suite 254
Salem, Or. 97301-4047

Governor Brown,

I am writing to request your careful consideration for letting Kyle Hedquist go before the Oregon Board of Parole. I pastor the Saturday evening church service at the Oregon State Penitentiary. I have been involved in prison ministry for the last 17 years and Pastoring at OSP for the last 9 years.

Kyle is one of my main leaders not only with his gifts as a worship leader but also someone I call on to help with administrative affairs in dealing with request at OSP Kyle understands the process of putting together proposals for his own ideas for improving prison life for those he serves time with. Like his proposal to build a playground inside the visiting area so dads could play with their children during visits. Kyle also does the same in educational areas, one such proposal started a parenting class in-person as well as on in-house TV.

Kyle is perhaps the most prosocial person I know, he goes to the yard and plays handball with men to build relationships in hopes of being able to encourage them to grow in the areas of their faith, and education, and family. Our own service has seen an amazing increase of the Hispanic population from his efforts on the yard.

Kyle Hedquist has shown himself to be a changed man and I respectfully ask for your careful consideration in his being able to see the Board.

Respectfully,



Pastor Tim Ralls



February 1, 2021

Dear Governor Brown,

My husband Tom and I are writing to you today in regards to our friend Mr. Kyle Hedquist's request for commutation.

When asked if we would write our recommendation for Kyle we did not hesitate for a minute because you see Kyle is just such a high energy type of guy who is always eager to help others in any way he can.

We met Kyle at Oregon State Penitentiary's Calvary Chapel services several years ago.

Kyle was an integral part of the services as a leader of one of the worship teams there. We all enjoyed hearing Kyle sing and play the guitar. He was kind and outgoing and always greeted us volunteers with a hand shake and a smile.

Kyle has volunteered his spare time as an event organizer for the prison events and he has also organized different men's groups to give them the skills they need to improve their lives and relationships with their families and others.

Kyle worked in the call center for years and when the Covid-19 hit the area, he volunteered to help in the laundry there at OSP where they do not only the prison laundry but that of some or all of the hospitals in the area.

Kyle has been an exemplary prisoner for many years and we don't see any reason why he could not be that kind of citizen on the outside as well.

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter. We hope that you will give it serious thought.

Sincerely,
Thomas & Carolyn
Wesley

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

To whom it may concern,

Re: Kyle Hedquist OSP #11230424

Kyle Hedquist was a student in a class I facilitated inside Oregon State Penitentiary designed to train Christian leaders. He was an excellent student and excelled at encouraging the other students to do their best. His positive attitude, friendly manner and welcoming smile were always present in my interactions with him.

I believe Kyle could be an excellent contributor to society on the outside by motivating others to moral living and respect for authority. People would be attracted to his warm personality and he would be a positive influence on others.

I sincerely believe Kyle has turned a corner, paid for his crime, and is ready to make a contribution for the good in the community.

Regards,

Rick Johnson

January 22nd, 2021

The Honorable Kate Brown
Governor, State of Oregon
900 Court Street Suite 254
Salem, Oregon 97310

Re: Kyle Hedquist

Dear Governor Brown,

I first met Kyle a number of years ago as a volunteer during an event on the Activities floor at OSP. His upbeat, positive attitude left me wondering...is this guy always like this or did I just catch him on a good day? Over time I came to recognize Kyle as one of the brightest, most encouraging, hard working and pro-active people I have ever met anywhere. His list of accomplishments during his 25 years of incarceration is truly amazing. He has not allowed the life sentence he was given weigh him down or deter him from making a positive difference in the lives around him.

When a need for a parenting class at OSP became evident several years ago, I knew where to turn! Starting new programs in a large facility like OSP is challenging, but with Kyle's insight and creativity an avenue was found to get that done.

Based on his outstanding accomplishments and behavioral history while incarcerated, I believe Kyle is worthy to have his sentence modified to allow him the opportunity to see the parole board. If he is ultimately restored to society, I'm convinced that Kyle has the vision and motivation to find ways to make the lives around him better. I see him using his talents to become the CEO of a worthwhile enterprise in which I would be very willing to be an investor.

Respectfully,



Andy Papendieck

Wealth Manager/Sheppard Wealth Management

OSP Outstanding Volunteer Award Recipient 2011 & 2014



January 31, 2021

Dear Governor Brown,

The first time I remember meeting Kyle Hedquist was June 30, 2018. Our group had come to the Oregon State Penitentiary to put on an outdoor concert as part of a fund raiser for the Memorial Healing Garden. This, we were told, was a very big deal – there had not been a yard show for 10 years and it was so important to the men inside that the day went on without incident so that they could bring more of this type of programming into the prison.

I had not actually met him yet, but prior to the event, prior to outside visitors and the rest of the adults in custody arriving, the men tasked with setting up the event gathered for a meeting. The man who spoke to them was Kyle and, while I do not know all that was said, the leadership he showed was clear. He stressed the responsibility they all shared for making the day a success and keeping everyone safe and it was obvious from the outside that his words and direction had meaning to them.

Speaking with Kyle later that day I could feel the sincerity of his words and heard how he is trying to live through his actions in way that attempts to atone for a past mistake. For some reason in that first conversation, he let me know why he was in prison. I believe he felt it was necessary to take responsibility, even to a total stranger, in hopes that I could see the origin of why he is constantly helping others and trying to be a positive influence on those around him.

Many months later while volunteering at OSP, our paths crossed again when our organization was attempting to start a class for a group of AICs. Kyle saw the benefits of the class for those that would be involved and was instrumental in bringing it to life. This started my working relationship with him and allowed me to understand, not only directly from Kyle but from other AICs as well, how he has spent his time not only improving himself but improving the lives of other AICs and promoting good citizenship through words and example.

Our organization, Bridgeworks Oregon, was honored to bring Kyle on as a board member in 2019. We currently focus our mission of Connecting Communities on the prison population and his insight into working with outside groups and the positive effect it has on AICs is invaluable. All of it has to do with improving the community – both inside the prison and outside. Kyle shares these ideals and has a long history of working for others.

Finally, Kyle is a role model – not just for AICs, but also, in my opinion, for those of us on the outside. It is incredible to me that a kid (he was 18 when he was sentenced, as you know) facing a life sentence without the possibility of parole, would thrive as he has and become such a positive influence on those around him. I truly appreciate his professionalism, honesty, hard work and humble nature. He has done meaningful work for so many of his fellow AICs and people outside of prison in the last 25 years, he deserves a chance to continue his good work outside of prison.

I ask, respectfully, that you grant commutation of Kyle's sentence in order to allow him to see the Parole Board for possible release.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Daniel Wilson', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Daniel Wilson
Bridgeworks Oregon
Executive Director

March 12, 2021

To: The Honorable Kate Brown
Office of the Governor
900 Court St., Suite 254
Salem, OR 97301-4047

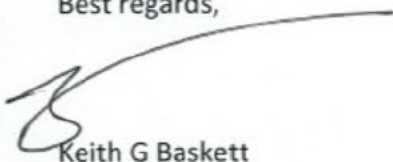
Governor Brown,

I am writing to you today to ask you to consider allowing Kyle Hedquist, incarcerated at (OSP) Oregon State Penitentiary, the ability to see the parole board.

I have been a volunteer at OSP for over 20 years. I have encouraged, counseled, mentored, educated, transitioned, and just listened to hundreds if not thousands of men there. Over the years a small group of us have worked tirelessly helping men and their families. We have started classes, activities, supported the different clubs, sports, started camps for their kids, restarted Family First bringing their kids inside to spend quality time with their Dads and much more. It has taken years to get this accomplished and could not have been done say for a few men who took on huge workloads to help us. Kyle, was one of those and helped us facilitate most of what we do up there. From behind the scenes, he has quietly helped hundreds of families and men on the inside. I have been amazed how he will go so far above and beyond to make life better for all of the men and never say no to a problem or be stopped by a roadblock. He is a solution oriented guy who is always looking at what we "can" do instead of what could be. In his quiet, professional and polite way he has learned so much and works so well with others that we have pushed him to mentor others as he has become an example of what men should be there. He has made a difference in a place that for over a hundred years has said "no". Showing his strength and skill with working with others he has found the "yes" door where there was none to be found, allowing men to join in and be a part of something more than just prison, rehabilitation.

I have come to the conclusion that there are very few in OSP that really deserve attention. I can honestly not recommend anyone more, for a chance to show those on the outside what he has done and who he is. Please, consider getting to know a man that has transitioned himself in a place where very few do on their own. I know you will be pleased with the outcome.

Best regards,



Keith G Baskett

[Redacted]

February 1, 2021

Dear Governor Brown:

I write on the behalf of Kyle Hedquist (currently serving Life without Parole) to ask you to commute his sentence to Life. At forty-four years old, Kyle has made a life for himself in prison—one centered on his education and spiritual growth. In the process, he has created opportunities for himself and his fellow prisoners while serving the greater community. The young man who fell at eighteen has become a man who deserves an audience with the Parole Board; moreover, he is the kind of person the Parole Board wishes to meet.

One remembers Kyle—in part because he has learned the importance of trust. His eyes, his handshake, his voice are steady. He is friendly, quick to laugh, and ready to help. His willingness to trust people conveys his belief that it is a reciprocal arrangement. Of all the human dynamics, trust bears the grounding weight of relationships. This understanding strengthens Kyle's natural leadership skills and empowers his work with his peers, as well as staff and administrators. He is a catalyst for positive exchange.

I first met Kyle at OSP during a fundraising event. I was one of a handful of visitors in the yard with 750 prisoners on a hot, June day in 2018. My band was playing Johnny Cash's "At Folsom Prison." Proceeds from the show benefited the construction of the Healing Garden (that now anchors the prison yard with Japanese maples and a koi pond.) During the event, Kyle acted as MC and our guide. A club president, Kyle viewed the measure of this event's success not by the money raised, but by its demonstration of how the different clubs could work toward a common goal. It was an act of faith—if we trust one another, we can make positive change. Two years later, the garden was constructed. During Covid, men at OSP see the lush plantings on their way to the Chow Hall and some seek solace walking the garden path. Monumental change like this begins with a seed, and it requires vision, leadership, and the "sleeves rolled up" work of all. Kyle understands his role in each of these stages.

I am a carded volunteer at OSP due to Kyle's encouragement. After the June concert, my creative partner Danny Wilson and I remained engaged at OSP by attending club social events. Kyle suggested that earning our volunteer badges would make it easy to stay connected, and of course, he was right. We wrote a proposal for a storytelling program called, "The Ground Beneath Us." Kyle helped us secure a room on the education floor for our group. In May 2019, we began mentoring men who wish to develop their writing and speaking voices with Kyle acting as a TA. We started with a group of nine (it has since grown to 16.) Covid has hampered our ability to come inside, so Kyle has helped us adapt our program to be a correspondence course. And in turn, we are supporting Kyle's work to put more educational programming on the in-prison TV channel. For that project, we secured a Covid-relief grant from Oregon Community Foundation, and have designed a film festival with an accompanying curriculum. Interested men receive a study guide and are able to watch the movies on Mondays. This whole chain of events is pure Kyle: he engages people, draws out a way for them to participate, and helps facilitate the exchange.

Within every biography there is the public persona recorded in accomplishments, and then, there is the private, unguarded self. Our writing group allows us to mine more closely to the interior life. Kyle's childhood changed, when he moved to his grandparent's farm. Written passages about farm life appear in his writing from time to time and the grown man reflects his teenaged self: "I remember the taste of homemade bread every morning. Maybe that is what I miss the most—with butter and homemade raspberry jam!" These detailed memories are foundational. Making bread and canning jam are investment activities, grounded in the very notion that hard work and discipline bring a reward, like the bright taste of jam on a dark, winter morning. "Living in the country also meant taking care of animals, riding horses, and lots of work, bucking hay, collecting grain, felling trees, and splitting firewood." Kyle's adaptation to prison has required him to hold close the connection to his grandparents, the integrity of farm life. You put in the labor every day. These values are the North Star that inform his choices as he navigates prison.

As we first became acquainted, Kyle shared a collection of essays he wrote entitled, "Confessions of a Penitentiary Death Dealer." At twenty one, Kyle volunteered in the prison hospice program: "I was in prison for murder, why would I want to care for strangers dying in a prison infirmary? But at the same time my own grandfather was suffering and slowly dying from Parkinson's disease. I didn't know anything about that disease and I felt helpless behind the 25-foot concrete walls." As a hospice worker, he spent hours sitting and listening to bedside confessions, stories, hopes, dreams. He bathed, and cared for men whose bodies were ravaged by Hep C, HIV, drug and alcohol abuse. The smell and mess of dying bodies is unpleasant, but it is the necessary, honest work of life. Most young people avoid meeting death. Kyle witnessed the final moments of reconciliation—the scale between the life one has led and the moment of grace. "I had to get past the fact that I too would die in this prison for my sins, I was a man, flesh and blood and so were my clients, just flesh and blood, but they were dying...I couldn't turn a blind eye and I certainly couldn't say I was better than them. How could I measure their humanity against my own?" Reading these essays, I was struck by Kyle's ability to connect with these men. Hospice work is a higher calling, it requires a person to see past the decaying husk of the human to help a person's soul escape. It requires one to be courageous in the face of Death. The picture becomes more poignant when the guide faces his own endgame—as a man sentenced to spend the rest of his days in the same prison.

Some twenty years later with Covid raging, OSP is locked down. Kyle's unit is the only one cleared for prison work, and he is asked if he will pitch in at the industrial laundry facility. He agrees and in his piece, "The Dirty Side of the Dirty End," he recounts how he jumps on the "dirty" side of the line. Thousands of pounds of soiled linens from local hospitals and clinics fill cart after cart. He measures out long days of bare-handed work, loading 140 pounds of contaminated laundry every 2 minutes and 58 seconds into the tunnel washer's mouth. A team of men labor alongside him. In his words: "I see heroes working behind these walls. Murders, rapists, robbers, and drug dealers all serving the greater good. There will be no rally behind these workers, no shout out from the local news broadcasters, but they still work. Some volunteer. When I think about the myth that will one day be told of Covid-19 at OSP, I will remember what I did, what I saw others do and the truth of it all. The choices that my fellow prisoners made to support local healthcare facilities, not because we were forced, not because we received time off, or increased pay, no we worked because we are Oregonians." This is citizenship.

The raw material of men who are working hard to find their way back home is deeply painful. Prison environments are antithetical for healing, growth, and prosperity. In spite of the conditions within the 25-foot walls, we find joy, and love, and friendship. Kyle Hedquist has constructed an adult life that is stronger than the concrete blocks and steel bars that hold him. "Prison is brutal. I am almost always cold and hungry. The fellow prisoners are actually the only good part of prison! Together we create community, laugh, and play games. We create our own ways of communication and a strong sense of community develops. But the structure, the building with its cold steep bars and locks are callous and separate the body and soul." For twenty six years, Kyle has managed to hold onto those small, good things: raspberry jam on fresh bread, the feel of brushing a pony on a summer day, the squeak of a squirrel in the woods. He has maintained long, sustained relationships. And most importantly, if he is allowed to argue his case to a parole board, he can be trusted to bring his best self to family and friends who anxiously await his return.

Thank you for your consideration,



Tracy Schlapp, OSP volunteer
@folsom50 project
founder, cumbersome multiples

ALBIES & STARK

ATTORNEYS AT LAW

Maya Rinta
maya@albiesstark.com

1 SW Columbia Street, #1850
Portland, OR 97204
Phone: 503-308-4770

Governor Kate Brown
Office of the Governor
900 Court St., Suite 254
Salem, OR 97301-4047

Letter in Support of Clemency for Kyle Hedquist

Dear Governor Brown:

On November 22, 2019, an event took place inside Oregon State Penitentiary (OSP). That evening, community leaders, clergy members, labor leaders, students, attorneys, artists, professors, and lifelong Oregon residents like myself made our way through security checkpoints and metal gates to listen to stories from a group of imprisoned people sentenced to Life Without Possibility of Parole. Kyle Hedquist was one of those people.

The event was a culmination of months of regular meetings and workshops with a small group of men incarcerated at OSP, as well as outside volunteers like myself. Throughout this time, the men worked together on telling a story about themselves to strangers—a story which included the worst thing they had ever done in their lives. This was where I first met Kyle.

I was constantly amazed and humbled by Kyle's compassion, vulnerability, and insight. He directly addressed the harm he had caused and did not shy away from being accountable. It was obvious to me he had been going through a transformative accountability process for a very long time. Kyle allowed himself to be vulnerable in front of the group, and gave voice to his shame and regret—often through tears. Over the months, I witnessed the vast depths of Kyle's remorse. I saw how he helped others in the group also risk being vulnerable and express their guilt, sorrow, and remorse. It was profound and something I rarely experience on the outside.

Working alongside Kyle, I learned more about his decades-long journey from the child he was to the man he is now today. I think about his young age at the time of the crime, and what his life would have been like had he been afforded all the love, care, and compassion that every child deserves. It struck me how Kyle's decades of work in the hospice program had not only allowed him to provide this very care and compassion for others at the end of their lives, but also allowed him the grace to become a changed man. I believe his hospice work is reflective of Kyle's dedication to being a force for positive change, and his continued commitment to helping and caring for others both inside the prison and out.

I believe human beings are capable of redemption. If he is released from prison, I have no doubt that Kyle will continue to bring more light and compassion into the world and continue to benefit our community. I believe he is a person worthy and deserving of your mercy. Governor Brown, I implore you please grant clemency to Kyle.

Sincerely,



Maya Rinta, Attorney at Law

February 12, 2021

Governor Kate Brown
900 Court St. NE
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Governor Brown:

I am writing to urge you to grant clemency to Kyle Hedquist.

I am a city planner by training and have spent my career in nonprofit organizations and more recently as a consultant working on climate change and sustainability issues with city governments. I did not expect to find myself volunteering in a maximum-security prison or writing to you, our Governor, urging you to use your special power to commute the sentence of someone who has admitted to taking an innocent life.

My only sister was murdered when we were in our twenties. The man who killed her is serving a life sentence in another state. I do not take lightly these issues of crime and punishment. However, my experiences in recent years and in particular my interactions with Kyle Hedquist made me realize that it is possible for people to transform themselves, to redeem themselves, and that acknowledging and honoring redemption is good for everyone – the guilty, the victims, and society at large.

In 2015 a chance connection led me inside the Oregon State Penitentiary to lend support to an environmental fundraiser that incarcerated men were leading. I was so moved and inspired by the hard work, high morals, commitment to personal transformation among the small group of men I met there that I started coming back occasionally to help with other projects. A few years later I became a carded volunteer in religious services and helped organize programs that encouraged incarcerated men to explore themes of responsibility and transformation through charitable works and storytelling.

Kyle Hedquist was a member of the Lifers Storytelling project that I helped lead in 2019. While I had known of Kyle through his reputation as a club president and active leaders of enrichment activities, I got to know him and his personal story on a deep level during the many months of work we did together in the storytelling group.

I was extremely impressed with how hard Kyle worked to explore his life experiences and the decisions he made that led him to prison. I was blown away with how honest and vulnerable he was in our weekly workshops – often fighting back tears or just breaking down completely. This kind of outwardly emotional expression of remorse in a group setting is not something I saw often inside the prison. Unfortunately, emotional vulnerability is not rewarded in prison culture and many men who serve long sentences build up defensive walls. I was impressed with how committed Kyle was his own process of accountability and redemption that he tore down those walls and shared his pain and remorse in front of his peers and, later, at an event with scores of prison residents and outside guests.

I know Kyle to be a leader. Prison staff and other incarcerated men acknowledge his diligent and persistent effort to organize programs that provide growth opportunities and positive experiences for people in the prison. I have also heard other men talk about how Kyle is a personal model, mentor, and support to them – how he helps people be their best selves inside the prison.

Kyle Hedquist is a good person. He is a better person than a lot of people I interact with regularly in the messy business of city politics and environmental advocacy. He made a horrible, impulsive, deadly decision to point a gun at someone and pull the trigger. He made that impulsive decision when he was a teenager. And, as I understand it, he was something of a model student before that, and even immediately afterwards – turning himself in, taking full responsibility.

Kyle has grown and changed immensely over the long years he has been incarcerated. He is a completely different person than the stupid teenager that made a terrible impulsive decision and took a life. He is not a danger to anyone. He has consistently demonstrated personal responsibility and a passion for contributing to his community and helping others. I know Kyle would be an asset to our community if he were allowed to be released from prison.

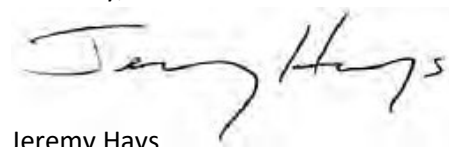
I implore you to use your extraordinary power as governor and grant clemency to Kyle Hedquist. Doing so, on behalf of the people of Oregon, demonstrates that we believe people are better than their worst moments, that people are possible of change and are able to overcome terrible decisions to be a good person and positive community member.

As crime victim myself, I long to see some good come from the consequences of my sister's murder. Someone wasting away their life, suffering in prison, doesn't bring my sister back or alleviate my family's pain, or make her life and its loss somehow more meaningful. What would be truly satisfying is if, somehow, that terrible pain and loss spurred some positive growth in someone else and led them to help some other people and contribute to making the world better. That's what I want out of a justice system.

That is what Kyle has done. By granting Kyle clemency, you allow him to be an asset to our community, to continue to serve and contribute without the limits of incarceration. You allow him to demonstrate the values that Oregonians have for life, liberty, and the potential we all have to become better people and make positive contributions to our communities.

I hope you will grant clemency to Kyle. I can't imagine many people more deserving.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Jeremy Hays", written in a cursive style.

Jeremy Hays



February 27, 2021

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing in support of Kyle Hedquist's petition to be granted a Parole Hearing.

I have been a volunteer at Oregon State Penitentiary for over ten years, and have become acquainted with Mr. Hedquist through my involvement with the 7th Step Club.

I have heard Mr. Hedquist speak about his early life - raised by a mother who blamed his being born for ruining her life - not a good way for any child to grow up. I have also heard him speak about his crime: although he was very young and panicked in that situation, he takes full responsibility for his actions.

Mr. Hedquist has used his time in prison as advantageously - in terms of personal growth and development - as anyone possibly can. He has taken advantage of every opportunity for education and growth that he has been offered. He has developed into a leader - a very effective one. He is an accomplished writer and an articulate and impassioned speaker. He is currently on the Executive Body of Toastmasters; in the past he has been President of the Lifers Club, and President of the 7th Step Club, which has a focus of preparing incarcerated people for release: even though he is not currently eligible, his goal is to help others learn how to succeed when they are released.

Of the many incarcerated people I have met during my time as a volunteer, I have not met anyone who I believe to be more deserving of a second chance than Kyle Hedquist. He will be an asset in any community of which he is a member.

Sincerely,



Ms. Terry B. Stein,
Vice President, Oregon CURE
President, 7th Step Foundation - Pacific Northwest Chapter
Salem, OR



The Honorable Kate Brown,
Governor of the State of Oregon
Office of the Governor
900 Court Street, Suite 254
Salem, OR 97301-4047

March 6th, 2021

RE: Letter in Support of Clemency for:

Hedquist, Kyle Blayne
11230424 % OSP
2605 State Street
Salem, OR 97310-0505

Dear Governor Brown,

I am writing to respectfully request that you consider Mr. Hedquist's petition for clemency.

Mr. Hedquist was admitted to the Department of Corrections in 1995 and currently has served 26 years for murder with complicated circumstances. Kyle was 18 at the time of his crime on the 25th of November, 1994.

While there are detailed psychologist's reports attached to his petition, I feel qualified to say that a very challenging childhood and adolescence dramatically colored Kyle's mindset and worldview at 19. This mindset and worldview do not even remotely apply to the Kyle Hedquist of today. To say that he has matured and learned a great deal in the past two and a half decades while incarcerated would be an understatement of historic proportions.

I have worked as a volunteer in several prisons and wrote my doctoral dissertation on the relationship between lifers and those doing shorted length sentences. I have met a lot of

[Redacted Signature]

incarcerated folks doing life. Kyle stands out as one of the two most intelligent, helpful, creative leaders I have enjoyed working with.

Numerous letters from Kyle's many supporters will document his involvement with prison organizations that benefit the Adult in Custody population as a whole. Over the years, Kyle has been either the President or a significant leadership force in a very considerable portion of those programs. Most recently, as President of the Lifer's Club and then as President of Oregon State Penitentiary's Seventh Step program.

Kyle's integrity and insight allow him to see the big picture (i.e., benefits and challenges to issues affecting both Adults in Custody, staff, and the Correctional system in general). This insight has made him a "go-to" guy for thoughts on ways to better the system and useful strategies to get all the diverse stakeholders on board with a positive plan.

Having someone like Kyle in prison helps volunteers, administrators, and even Dome Building staff, where Kyle's name and tireless work are very familiar. Volunteers and staff are confident that the programs Kyle is involved with will be run with integrity and fairness and that events will go off as planned.

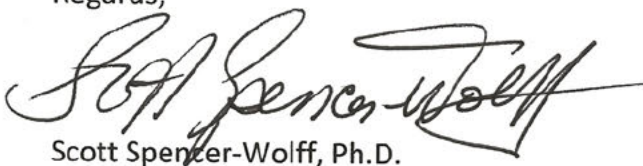
Mr. Hedquist's continued incarceration limits his capacity to use his considerable insight in ways very much needed as we work collaboratively to rethink Oregon's Correctional practices. I am excited to see Kyle make the substantial contributions I believe he can make in the broader community.

No one who has met or worked with Kyle believes that he is in any way a danger to the community or that the circumstances which resulted in his crimes of record would be replicated under any circumstances.

Aside from my professional thought that giving ANY nine-teen year old a Life Without Parole sentence reflects prosecutorial misconduct, I believe that the time Mr. Hedquist has served, his exemplary record and service to the prison community and making it a better place for all, warrants your serious consideration as a candidate for clemency.

Please do not hesitate to contact me directly should you have questions.

Regards,



Scott Spencer-Wolff, Ph.D.





February 12, 2021

Dear Governor Brown,

In the many years I have been involved in prison education efforts at the Oregon State Penitentiary, Kyle Hedquist is the most effective organizer I have known, dedicated to helping as many people as possible. I know him in my capacity as a University of Oregon instructor and as the Coordinator for the Prison Education Program. Through those roles, I have also collaborated with Kyle in working with the clubs he runs, and finding ways to offer more people positive opportunities and education while inside.

I have been involved with the University of Oregon's work at OSP since 2007 and am a founding member of the ACE (Another Chance at Education) leadership group which includes both "outside" faculty and students and incarcerated leaders. I have known Kyle for approximately six years. Work in prison education is inspiring, challenging, exhausting, exhilarating, and a constant balance of priorities. There is never enough time or resources. There are good ideas that will never come to fruition, and restrictions that make working as a program manager extremely limiting. I can only do my work because of leaders like Kyle who know the system, know what is reasonable to ask for, and know how to think in the long term. Kyle is both a realist and a perpetual optimist.

For the first eight years of the UO Prison Education Program's existence, we were focused almost exclusively on for-credit Inside-Out classes. Other projects were single events and for limited numbers of people. Beginning in 2015, we began expanding our work to offer not-for-credit programs that were meant to reach a broader population. We added academic writing workshops, book discussions, faculty lectures, academic advising, participation in AIC Club events, and more. In our last full academic year (2018–2019), we served over 800 incarcerated individuals with our events, held at four different institutions. Kyle suggested many of these projects and assisted in all of those that took place at OSP. He would recruit new participants, ensure our meeting space was set and ready, and would help design the content and facilitate the activities themselves. Kyle is a servant leader; he handles projects both at the creative and center-stage level and in the most mundane and tedious of details. He does both with great skill and good humor.

In the time since Covid, our program has been working to expand on two ideas that Kyle originally suggested. One is to send in recordings of lectures from the UO campus for them to play over the institution TV channel. That kind of idea requires someone with insider



knowledge, like Kyle, who sees the existing infrastructure and thinks creatively about how to shape it to new and useful purposes. He also encouraged us to find ways to send reading material to people who are in various kinds of isolation: disciplinary housing, mental health housing, and those who are in medical isolation. We are currently working to fulfill that vision, and while we are enthusiastic about what we are creating we also miss his insights in shaping the project.

I believe that others will speak to Kyle's excellence as a student, so I will simply say in brief that he is deeply intelligent, introspective, analytical, and eager to apply coursework to 'real life,' and lived experience to his coursework. He has demonstrated a deep empathy for others' experiences and an eagerness to engage with complex ideas of social issues both inside and outside the prison walls.

When I think of people I know who are serving long sentences and who are making a difference, Kyle is at the top of that list. He works to improve the situation for others on the inside, including those who are still in situations of crisis, of resistance to change, and who do not believe they will fit in educational spaces. He reaches out. He gives second chances. He lets go of impossibilities and moves on to the next idea. He empowers others.

Through our program, he has had a positive impact on dozens of community members including many undergraduate campus-based participants in our programs. He is adept at making people feel welcome and their opinions respected. His life sentence has not stopped him from caring about the broader world, and in fact he engages with more efforts to offer positivity and opportunities than most people I know out here "in the world." His example has inspired my work

It is my belief that Kyle Hedquist will be a positive part of whatever community he is in. Thank you for considering his petition, and I am happy to provide further reference as needed. I can be reached at [REDACTED].

Sincerely,

Katie Dwyer

Prison Education Program Coordinator
University of Oregon



UNIVERSITY OF OREGON
College of Arts and Sciences

April 4, 2021

Dear Governor Brown,

I understand that Kyle Hedquist, an adult-in-custody currently incarcerated at the Oregon State Penitentiary, is seeking clemency.

I met Kyle in winter of 2017 when, alongside students from the University of Oregon, he took an Inside-Out class from me on "Literature and Ethics: Shakespeare and Levinas." At a time when the country was about to experience a dramatic rise in hate-crimes after the 2016 presidential election, we looked at what Shakespeare had to say about "the other" in three of his plays: about Shylock the Jew in *Merchant of Venice*; about the black Moor (Muslim) Othello in Shakespeare's play of that name; and about the indigenous Caliban and what he suffers at the hands of stranded European invaders in *The Tempest*.

Kyle did very good work throughout the quarter. What particularly struck me about Kyle was his capacity as a leader, at how respected he was by his fellow students. He came into his own at the end of the class, when he acted in a scene from Shakespeare's *The Tempest*. His performance was vigorous and convincing. He lit up the classroom, and was a big hit!

Kyle strikes me as likeable, good-natured, and a born leader. His classmates concurred. Here is what one of his classmates from the University of Oregon said about Kyle in the class anthology we compiled at the conclusion of our time together: "Kyle was an integral part of our Inside-Out class. I always looked forward to my conversations with him because he is insightful, caring, curious, and one of the funniest people I've ever encountered. Kyle's smile and high spirits could brighten anyone's mood and he definitely had a positive impact on the atmosphere of our classroom."

I encourage you to consider offering clemency to Kyle Hedquist. With his positive outlook, his affable personality, and his outgoing spirit, he has what it takes to flourish in the general population.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Steven Shankman", followed by a horizontal line.

Steven Shankman, UNESCO Chair in Transcultural Studies, Interreligious Dialogue, and Peace

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

118 Prince Lucien Campbell Hall, 1286 University of Oregon, Eugene OR 97403-1286

☎ 541-346-3911 ✉ 541-346-1509 <http://english.uoregon.edu/>

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UNIVERSITY OF OREGON | College of Arts and Sciences

January 21, 2021

Honorable Kate Brown
Office of the Governor
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Governor Brown:

I am writing in my capacity as a faculty member at the University of Oregon in regard to a commutation petition from Mr. Kyle Hedquist, a student of mine who is incarcerated at the Oregon State Penitentiary. I have known Kyle for approximately eight years, and have worked with him in a variety of educational capacities, as well as in relation to his participation in a number of clubs in which he has held leadership positions. I will describe some of this work so that you will have a sense of how I have come to hold Kyle in such high regard, and the basis for the deep appreciation and respect that he has earned from me.

Kyle is a member of a group called ACE (Another Chance at Education) that serves as a steering committee of sorts for the University of Oregon's Prison Education Program, which I direct. ACE has bi-monthly meetings, and hosts different types of events (common readings, lectures, workshops) on other occasions. Through these activities I have been interacting with Kyle in small-group settings approximately thirty times per year, and in larger group settings another 10 times a year. Kyle has also been a student in my Inside-Out courses, which are comprised of incarcerated students and an equal number of students that we bring to the prison from the University's campus in Eugene. Each year I also participate in five to ten club activities (Lifers, Toastmasters, Seventh Step) in which Kyle has been serving as president or an executive officer.

In many of these gatherings Kyle has been a primary architect, convener, and facilitator. Whatever his role, he has always done his work at an extremely high level, and if Kyle is in charge, success is pretty much guaranteed. Kyle is a very hard worker, he holds himself to a high standard, and he is a good student – all of this in relation to his studies, the intricacies of prison bureaucracy, and the dynamics that allow people to operate at their best. I have also found Kyle to be an unfailingly supportive person, and someone who makes time to be a compassionate and effective listener. In every venue,

DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY

1251 University of Oregon, Eugene, OR 97403-1251 | (541) 346-4555 | Fax (541) 346-2067



UNIVERSITY OF OREGON | College of Arts and Sciences

whether collaborating with those he has known for years, or people who he is meeting for the first time, Kyle extends himself, and his welcoming and helpful manner is appreciated by everyone he encounters.

One aspect of Kyle's comportment that has been extremely helpful to our Prison Education Program is that Kyle has the respect of DOC staff - running from Correctional Officers up to Superintendents and even senior staff at the Dome Building. Kyle has been a constant and effective advocate on behalf of our work - and that of others involved in education, and he has similarly been active on behalf of many of the volunteers that are involved in club activities. Because we are not present at O.S.P. when many programmatic decisions are made, Kyle has often served as our "oar in the water", and his efforts have been beneficial for countless people from campus, from the community, and for those who are incarcerated. As president of the Lifer's and Seventh Step clubs Kyle was always looking for ways to create additional opportunities for constructive engagement, and over the past decade he has been unflagging; and all of this in addition to his regular prison job!

Beyond what I have described in relation to his work, I would add that Kyle has always been eager to contribute to the world beyond the prison's walls. He has a keen interest in the work of the university, of social welfare and youth organizations in the community, and in volunteer efforts that can be aided by the clubs, and he has looked to support them in any way that he can. He exhibits real caring for those that I bring into the prison, and for those he is engaged with inside (including prison staff). I have seen Kyle take responsibility for and express contrition about the things that brought him to prison, and I have never heard him ask for pity, seen him do anything to suggest that he thinks of himself as a victim, or exhibit any sense of entitlement.

In sum, I have tremendous esteem for Mr. Hedquist, and I have found him to be reliable and trustworthy in every aspect of our work together, in fact I would be happy to have him as a neighbor. I know that he has a whole lot to contribute as a member of our society outside the prison walls, and hope that he gets the opportunity to do that. I believe that he has done everything a person can do to be worthy of your consideration, and he will not disappoint you. I appreciate your attention to his request.

With respect,

Prof. Shaul Cohen
Director, UO Prison Education Program

DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY

1251 University of Oregon, Eugene, OR 97403-1251 | (541) 346-4555 | Fax (541) 346-2067

February 24, 2021

Governor Kate Brown
Office of the Governor
900 Court Street, Suite 254
Salem, OR 97301-4047

Dear Governor Brown:

I am a retired professor of Chinese literature at the University of Oregon and have for the past several years been doing voluntary educational work at the Oregon State Correctional Institution and the Oregon State Penitentiary. Through a university-level course I taught on early Chinese philosophy at the penitentiary last winter I got to know Kyle Hedquist (OSP #11230424), who enrolled in the course and also acted as a kind of liaison with the other men in the class for collecting term papers, helping xerox and disseminate handouts, etc. Kyle impressed me most deeply both for his efforts in the class, which earned him a high grade, and for the position of respect he clearly has gained in the eyes of the other men. He is, in short, a natural leader.

As I got to know Kyle a bit better, he told me of his work in the hospice program at the penitentiary and pointed me to an essay he had written on that topic, an essay that earned him an honorary mention in the PEN 2019 Prison Writing Contest. His paper, which can be read online, is entitled "Confessions of a Penitentiary Death Dealer" and is both a fine and deeply moving piece of writing. Most importantly, this essay conveys a good sense of what Kyle has become as he has striven to reform through serving others in their most. I recommend that paper most enthusiastically (<https://pen.org/confessions-of-a-penitentiary-death-dealer/>).

Anyone who enters a prison to teach, especially to teach a subject that many might consider remote or even esoteric, does so with a certain amount of concern. My class at OSP was, I believe, a great success, and I owe that success in large measure to Kyle, who was extremely welcoming, sat on the first row and participated eagerly in all discussions, and quickly became someone I could count on for help. Kyle has a great sense of humor and helped me establish a comfortable classroom environment. It became a kind of class joke, when something went wrong, however remote the problem might be, that we could always "blame it on Kyle." He always took such ribbing with a warm smile and with obvious affection for his classmates.

I know little of Kyle's past, so I cannot comment on his crime. I do, however, believe, based upon what I have seen, that he would be an extremely strong candidate for commutation. His sociability and deep sensitivity to others would make him a valuable asset to the community. Since he knows the prison system well and has such outstanding leadership qualities, I could imagine him working very successfully with newly released men, as well as in a whole host of other activities.

I recommend him to you most heartily and thank you for your attention to this matter.

With great respect,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Durrant', is contained within a rectangular box. A long, thin horizontal line extends from the right side of the signature, passing under the text below.

Stephen Durrant
Professor Emeritus
Distinguished Professor of the Humanities
University of Oregon

March 22, 2021



The Honorable Governor Kate Brown
Governor of Oregon
900 Court St., NE
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Governor Brown:

I am writing to ask that you consider commuting the life-without-parole sentence of Oregon State Penitentiary inmate Kyle Hedquist — not that he be summarily released, but that he be allowed a parole hearing.

I have known Kyle for more than five years. We met when he was a student in an education program I helped facilitate at OSP. I interacted with him most recently when I sat in on a Chinese Philosophy course offered by University of Oregon at OSP.

Kyle is an exceptional candidate for commutation in multiple respects. While Kyle has a keen mind (he has always been a straight-A student), his mental acuity is less significant than his good heart:

- Most notable is Kyle's heart to be of service to the community, and to mobilize others in the service of the community -- both the community inside the walls of OSP and the community at large. When it comes to serving the OSP community, Kyle was among the very first hospice volunteers. As a club president, Kyle has submitted to OSP administrators a host of suggestions on ways to improve community life at OSP. At the same time, Kyle has taken the lead in mobilizing his fellow inmates to address the needs of persons in need, even outside the prison. He was instrumental, for example, in spearheading a campaign that raised hundreds of dollars from his fellow inmates to help a Salem teen who was orphaned in a tragic auto accident.
- Kyle demonstrates exemplary poise and patience in relating to everyone – from his fellow inmates to prison administrators. His temperament, initiative, and diligence make him a stand-out leader. That he has earned the respect of his fellow inmates is evident in that he is, year after year, elected to the presidency of one after another club. He has earned the respect also of prison administrators. Kyle was among the inmates chosen by Superintendent Kelly's office to help address race issues at OSP.
- As gifted, and capable, and popular as is Kyle, he is humble and gracious. His unassuming style reflects the secure sense of self that he has achieved, against the odds, by finding a sense of meaning and purpose, even behind prison walls.

Kyle is no longer the befuddled teen who, in a moment of mindless panic, made a terrible choice he cannot undo. He has felt the weight of that terrible offense for more than 30 years, and that weight has not lessened over time. But rather than thrusting him into self-loathing or despair, it has moved him to become a man of compassion with a heart to serve. Our community needs people like Kyle, people with a heart to be there for neighbors in pain and neighbors in need. I trust you will see your way clear to allow the parole board to give consideration to whether it is time to allow Kyle to make that positive contribution in our larger community.

Sincerely,

Greg Haskell

