

**Northwestern**  
PRITZKER SCHOOL OF LAW  
Bluhm Legal Clinic

Center on Wrongful Convictions

October 24, 2019

Governor Tony Evers  
115 East  
State Capitol  
Madison, WI 53702

Dear Governor Evers:

We write this letter to express our sincere hope that you will extend executive clemency, in the form of either a pardon or a commutation, to Brendan Dassey.

Each person who signed this letter brings a different perspective. Some of us are lawyers who practice variously in the state and federal courts, including in trial courts, appellate courts, and the United States Supreme Court. Some of us are psychologists, including leading experts in the psychology of interrogations and confessions. Some of us are experts on juvenile justice; some of us are disability experts. Some of us are academics who study miscarriages of justice in Wisconsin and abroad. Some of us are exonerees who have ourselves been convicted of crimes we did not commit and who were later cleared by DNA evidence. Still others simply wish to lend our names and voices in support of Brendan.

Each of us feels called upon by our conscience to sign this letter. Many of us believe Brendan Dassey to be wrongly convicted and his statements, which constitute the primary evidence against him, to be unreliable. Many of us believe that the process that led to the conviction of this sixteen-year-old special education student was indefensibly flawed, characterized by egregious defense attorney misconduct. And many of us believe that Brendan's sentence – life in prison, with no chance of parole until 2048 – is wildly inappropriate. All of us agree that, after serving more than thirteen years in prison and accumulating an exemplary prison record, it is time to bring Brendan Dassey home.

We call upon you, Governor Evers, to use your sovereign power of executive clemency, whether in the form of a pardon or a commutation, to end the incarceration of Brendan Dassey. You are an educator; you are a reformer; and you are a believer, like us, in justice, mercy, and redemption. After you review this case, we believe your conscience will compel the conclusion that Brendan is worthy of the exercise of your clemency power. We respectfully urge you to pardon Brendan Dassey or commute his sentence.

Sincerely,

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Daniel N. Abrahamson, Founder, Office of Legal Affairs of the Drug Policy Alliance; Wisconsin State Bar Member

Sergio E. Acosta, Chief, General Crimes, United States Attorney's Office for the Northern District of Illinois (2003-2010); Assistant United States Attorney for the Northern District of Illinois (1990-1999; 2001-2003); Assistant State Attorney, Miami-Dade County, Florida (1985-1990)

Obie Anthony, Exoneree (California, 16 years in prison)

Roy L. Austin, Jr., Deputy Assistant Attorney General, Civil Rights Division, United States Department of Justice (2010-2014); Assistant United States Attorney for the District of Columbia (2002-2007; 2009-2010); Trial Attorney, Civil Rights Division, United States Department of Justice (1995-2000)

Rachel E. Barkow, Faculty Director, Center on the Administration of Criminal Law, NYU School of Law

Kaitlyn Barnes, Post-Graduate Fellow in Law at the Barton Child Law and Policy Center, Emory University School of Law

Elizabeth Bartholet, Morris Wasserstein Professor of Law and Faculty Director of the Child Advocacy Program, Harvard Law School\*

Shima Baradaran Baughman, Professor, University of Utah College of Law

Julie Baumer, Exoneree (Michigan, 4.5 years in prison)

Lara Bazelon, Professor of Law and Director of the Criminal & Juvenile and Racial Justice Clinics, University of San Francisco School of Law

Acena Beck, Executive Director, Children's Law Center

Reginald Dwayne Betts, J.D., poet; 2018 Guggenheim Fellow; 2018 National Endowment for the Arts Fellow

Jeanne Bishop, Member of Advisory Board of the Center on Wrongful Convictions and national restorative justice advocate

Iris Blandón-Gitlin, Ph.D., Professor of Psychology, California State University, Fullerton

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Patricia C. Bobb, Principal, Patricia C. Bobb and Associates; President of the Chicago Bar Association (1997-1998)

David J. Bradford, Acting Chair of Litigation Department, Jenner & Block LLP\*; Fellow, American College of Trial Lawyers

James S. Brady, United States Attorney for the Western District of Michigan (1977-1981)

Carol Mosley Braun, United States Senator (1993-1999)

Brandy M. Brixy, Chief, Juvenile Justice Division, Law Office of the Cook County Illinois Public Defender

Justin Brooks, Director and Co-Founder, California Innocence Project

Samantha Buckingham, Clinical Professor and Director of the Juvenile Justice Clinic, Center for Juvenile Law and Policy, Loyola Law School (Los Angeles)

Kristine Bunch, Exoneree (Indiana, 17 years in prison)

Tricia Rojo Bushnell, Executive Director, Midwest Innocence Project

A. Bates Butler III, United States Attorney for the District of Arizona (1980-1981); First Assistant United States Attorney for the District of Arizona (1977-1980); Deputy Attorney, Pima County, Arizona (1970-1977)

Robert L. Byman, President, American College of Trial Lawyers (2013-2014)

Phillip Scott Cannon, Exoneree (Oregon, 11 years in prison)

Melissa D. Carter, Clinical Professor of Law and Executive Director of the Barton Child Law and Policy Center, Emory Law School

Elizabeth Cauffman, Ph.D., Professor of Psychological Science; Director, Center for Psychology & Law; Director, Masters in Legal & Forensic Psychology; University of California, Irvine

Frank P. Cervone, Executive Director, Support Center for Child Advocates

Carol A. Chase, Assistant United States Attorney for the Central District of California (1983-1987)

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Kami N. Chavis, Assistant United States Attorney for the District of Columbia (2002-2005)

Aaron Clark-Rizzio, Executive Director, Louisiana Center for Children's Rights

Hayley Cleary, MPP, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Criminal Justice, Virginia Commonwealth University

Laura Cohen, Distinguished Clinical Professor of Law, Justice Virginia Long Scholar, and Director of the Criminal and Youth Justice Clinic, Rutgers Law School

Kevin Cokley, Ph.D., Professor of Educational Psychology, University of Texas at Austin

Alexis Collins, Deputy Chief, Counterterrorism Section, United States Department of Justice (2014-2015); Counsel, Office of the Attorney General, National Security Division, United States Department of Justice (2012-2014); Assistant United States Attorney for the Eastern District of New York (2009-2011); Trial Attorney, Counterterrorism Section, United States Department of Justice (2003-2009)

Jeffrey D. Colman, Partner, Jenner & Block LLP\*; Fellow, American College of Trial Lawyers

William F. Conlon, Chief, Civil Division, United States Attorney's Office for the Northern District of Illinois (1977-1979); Assistant United States Attorney for the Northern District of Illinois (1974-1979)

James W. Cooper, President, Assistant United States Attorneys Association of the District of Columbia (2012-2013); Deputy Chief, Criminal Division, United States Attorney's Office, District of Columbia (2005-2007); Acting Chief, National Security Section, United States Attorney's Office, District of Columbia (2006-2007); Assistant United States Attorney for the District of Columbia (1994-1997; 2002-2007); Trial Attorney, Public Integrity Section, United States Department of Justice (1997-2002)

Stewart Cooper, Ph.D., Member, Board of Directors, American Psychological Association

Mark Costanzo, Ph.D., Professor of Psychological Science, Claremont McKenna College & Claremont Graduate University

Michael Cotter, United States Attorney for the District of Montana (2010-2017)

Patrick J. Cotter, Assistant United States Attorney for the Eastern District of New York (1990-1993); Special Attorney, United States Department of Justice, Organized Crime Strike Force, Eastern District of New York (1986-1990)

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William B. Cummings, United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Virginia (1975-1979)

Brian Cutler, Ph.D., Professor, Ontario Tech University; President of the American Psychology-Law Society (2011-2012); Editor-in-Chief of *Law and Human Behavior* (2005-2011)

Mani Dabiri, Assistant United States Attorney for the Central District of California (2008-2009)

Rosie Phillips Davis, Ph.D., ABPP, President, American Psychological Association

Sarah Davis, Associate Director, Legal Rights Center

Cynthia de las Fuentes, Ph.D., Member, Board of Directors, American Psychological Association

Maddy deLone, Esq., Executive Director, Innocence Project

Jeffrey Deskovic, Exoneree (New York, 16 years in prison)

Michael Hayes Dettmer, United States Attorney for the Western District of Michigan (1994-2001)

Joe Luis Diaz, Exoneree (California, 9 years in prison)

Nancy J. Diehl, Chief, Felony Trial Division, Wayne County, Michigan (2004-2009); Assistant Prosecuting Attorney, Wayne County, Michigan (1981-2009)

William Michael Dillon, Exoneree (Florida, 27 years in prison)

Anthony DiPippo, Exoneree (New York, 20 years in prison)

Gregory L. Diskant, Chief Appellate Attorney, United States Attorney's Office for the Southern District of New York (1980); Assistant United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York (1976-1980)

Kim Dvorchak, Executive Director, National Association of Counsel for Children\*

Roseanne Eckert, Coordinating Attorney, Florida Resentencing and Review Project at Florida International University College of Law

Judith G. Edersheim, J.D., M.D., Co-Founder and Co-Director of The Massachusetts General Hospital Center for Law, Brain and Behavior

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Jon Eldan, Director, After Innocence

Tyrone C. Fahner, Attorney General of Illinois (1980-1983); Director of Illinois Department of Law Enforcement (1977-1979); Assistant United States Attorney for the Northern District of Illinois (1971-1975)

Ira M. Feinberg, Chief Appellate Attorney, United States Attorney's Office for the Southern District of New York (1998-2000); Deputy Chief Appellate Attorney, United States Attorney's Office for the Southern District of New York (1995-1998); Assistant United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York (1989-1995)

Noel Fidel, Judge, Superior Court of Arizona, Maricopa County (1982-1987); Judge, Arizona Court of Appeals (1987-2002)

Mark Flanagan, Assistant United States Attorney, Northern District of California (1991-1995)

Anthony Franze, Counsel, Appellate and Supreme Court Practice, Arnold & Porter Kay Scholer LLP

Joseph Frey, Exoneree (Wisconsin, 23 years in prison)

Michael Friedman, Executive Director, Legal Rights Center

Brandon L. Garrett, L. Neil Williams Professor of Law and Director of the Center for Science and Justice, Duke University School of Law

Bennett L. Gershman, Assistant Attorney General, New York State Special Prosecutor's Office, New York (1972-1976); Assistant District Attorney, New York County, New York (1966-1972)

Nancy Gertner, J.D., M.A., United States District Judge, United States District Court for the District of Massachusetts (1994-2011); Managing Director of The Massachusetts General Hospital Center for Law, Brain and Behavior; Senior Lecturer of Law, Harvard Law School

Dean Gillespie, Exoneree (Ohio, 20 years in prison)

Mark Godsey, Carmichael Professor of Law, Director of Ohio Innocence Project, University of Cincinnati College of Law

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Naomi E. Goldstein, Ph.D., Professor of Psychology; Co-Director of the J.D./Ph.D. Program in Law and Psychology; Director of the Juvenile Justice Research and Reform Lab, Drexel University

Len Goodman, Principal, Len Goodman Law Office LLC

Andrew Gordon, Associate Director, Legal Rights Center

Jamie S. Gorelick, Deputy Attorney General of the United States (1994-1997)

Gisli Gudjonsson, Commander of the Order of the British Empire (CBE), Emeritus Professor, Institute of Psychiatry, King's College London

Martin Guggenheim, Fiorello LaGuardia Professor of Clinical Law, New York University Law School

Jan Lawrence Handzlik, Assistant United States Attorney for the Central District of California, Fraud & Special Prosecutions Section (1971-1976)

Emily Haney-Caron, J.D., Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Psychology, John Jay College of Criminal Justice

John J. Hanlon, Executive Director, Illinois Innocence Project

Amy Harfeld, National Policy Director, Children's Advocacy Institute

Stephen Harper, Executive Director, Florida Resentencing and Review Project at Florida International University College of Law

LeOndra Clark Harvey, Ph.D., Member, Board of Directors, American Psychological Association

Crisanne Hazen, Assistant Director, Child Advocacy Program, Harvard Law School

Ryan S. Hedges, Assistant United States Attorney for the Northern District of Illinois (2008-2015)

Donald H. Heller, Assistant United States Attorney for the Eastern District of California (1973-1977); Assistant District Attorney, New York County, New York (1969-1973)

Stephen E. Henderson, Judge Haskell A. Holloman Professor of Law, University of Oklahoma

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Kristin Henning, Agnes N. Williams Research Professor of Law and Director, Juvenile Justice Clinic and Initiative, Georgetown University Law Center

Lindsay Herf, Executive Director, Arizona Justice Project

Randy Hertz, Professor of Clinical Law, New York University School of Law

Wayne Hoover, Executive Director of the International Association of Interviewers; Partner, Wicklander-Zulawski & Assoc.

Shon Hopwood, Associate Professor of Law, Georgetown University Law Center

Professor Carobetlyn Hoyle, Faculty of Law, University of Oxford

Bruce R. Jacob, Assistant Attorney General of Florida, Criminal Appeals Section (1960-1962)

Sonia Jacobs, Exoneree (Florida, 16 years in prison)

Daniel Jacobson, Associate Counsel, Office of the White House Counsel (2015-2017)

Amy Jeffress, United States Department of Justice Attaché, United States Embassy, London (2010-2014); Counselor to the Attorney General for National Security and International Matters, United States Department of Justice (2009-2010); Chief, National Security Section, and Assistant United States Attorney for the District of Columbia (1996-2009); Counselor to the Deputy Attorney General (1994-1996)

Charles Johnson, Exoneree (Illinois, 21 years in prison)

Julie Jonas, Legal Director, Innocence Project of Minnesota

Sara H. Jones, Executive Director, Innocence Project of Minnesota

Kimberly P. Jordan, Director of the Justice for Children Project, Moritz College of Law, The Ohio State University

James I. Kaplan, Partner, Quarles & Brady LLP

Saul Kassin, Ph.D., President, American Psychology-Law Society (2007-2008); Distinguished Professor of Psychology, John Jay College of Criminal Justice



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Meredith T. Kennedy, Director, Innocence Network

Amanda Knox, Exoneree (Italy, 4 years in prison)

Miriam Aroni Krinsky, Criminal Appellate Chief and Chief, General Crimes, United States Attorney's Office for the Central District of California (1991-2002); Assistant United States Attorney for the Central District of California (1987-1988; 1990-1991); Chair, Solicitor General's Criminal Appellate Advisory Group (2000-2002)

Kristin M. Ladd, Executive Director, Colorado Juvenile Defender Center

Michael E. Lamb, Professor of Psychology, University of Cambridge

Stephen G. Larson, United States District Judge, United States District Court for the Central District of California (2006-2009); United States Magistrate Judge, United States District Court for the Central District of California (2000-2006); Chief, Organized Crime Section, United States Attorney's Office for the Central District of California, and Assistant United States Attorney for the Central District of California (1991-2000)

Jody Kent Lavy, Executive Director, Campaign for the Fair Sentencing of Youth

Ginny Lefever, Exoneree (Ohio, 22 years in prison)

Richard A. Leo, Ph.D., J.D., Hamill Family Chair and Professor of Law and Psychology, University of San Francisco School of Law

Marsha L. Levick, Chief Legal Officer, Juvenile Law Center

Scott Lewis, Exoneree (Connecticut, 20 years in prison)

Timothy K. Lewis, United States Circuit Judge, United States Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit (1992-1999); United States District Judge, United States District Court for the Western District of Pennsylvania (1991-1992); Assistant United States Attorney for the Western District of Pennsylvania (1983-1991); Assistant District Attorney, Allegheny County, Pennsylvania (1980-1983)

Wallace K. Lightsey, Wyche Law Firm; Fellow, American College of Trial Lawyers

Leah Litman, Assistant Professor of Law, University of Michigan Law School

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Carl H. Loewenson, Jr., Assistant United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York (1985-1990)

Margaret Colgate Love, United States Pardon Attorney (1990-1997)

Erin Lovell, Executive Director, Legal Counsel for Youth and Children

Eddie Lowery, Exoneree (Kansas, 21 years in prison)

Ronald C. Machen, United States Attorney for the District of Columbia (2010-2015)

Stephanie Madon, Ph.D., Professor of Psychology, Iowa State University

Lindsay C. Malloy, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Forensic Psychology, University of Ontario Institute of Technology

Susan Vivian Mangold, Chief Executive Officer, Juvenile Law Center

Terri L. Mascherin, Partner, Jenner & Block LLP\*; President of the Chicago Bar Association (2010-2011)

Joshua J. Maticotta, Psy.D., CAHIMS, Board President & Chief Executive Officer, Integrative Behavioral Health Research Institute

Edward Mathews, Director, Irish Innocence Project at Griffith College

Marc Mauer, Executive Director, The Sentencing Project

Alejandro N. Mayorkas, Deputy Secretary, United States Department of Homeland Security (2013-2016); Director, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (2009-2013); United States Attorney for the Central District of California (1998-2001); Assistant United States Attorney, Central District of California (1989-1998)

Tamara McAnally, Exoneree (California, 7 years in prison)

Beth McCann, District Attorney, Second Judicial District, Denver, Colorado (2017-present); Colorado State Representative, House District 8 (2009-2016); Deputy Attorney General of Colorado (2001-2009)

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Julie E. McConnell, Director of the Children’s Defense Clinic and Clinical Professor of Law, University of Richmond School of Law\*

Mary B. McCord, Acting Assistant Attorney General for National Security, United States Department of Justice (2016-2017); Principal Deputy Assistant Attorney General, National Security Division, United States Department of Justice (2014-2017); Assistant United States Attorney for the District of Columbia (1994-2001; 2002-2014)

Kim McGill, Organizer, Youth Justice Coalition

Darcy McGraw, Director, Connecticut Innocence Project

Christian Meissner, Ph.D., Professor of Psychology, Iowa State University

Susan Mellen, Exoneree (California, 17 years in prison)

Seth Miller, Executive Director, Innocence Project of Florida

John R. Mills, Principal Attorney, Phillips Black, Inc.

Randall Mills, Exoneree (Tennessee, 11 years in prison)

Jeffery Scott Mio, President of the Society for the Psychological Study of Culture, Ethnicity, and Race, American Psychological Association (2002-2003); Professor of Psychology, California State Polytechnic University

Craig Missakian, Deputy Chief Counsel, United States House of Representatives Select Committee on Benghazi (2014-2016); Assistant United States Attorney for the Central District of California (2001-2010); Deputy District Attorney, Los Angeles County, California

Marcy Mistrett, Chief Executive Officer, Campaign for Youth Justice

Alaurice Tafoya Modi, President, Board of Directors, Colorado Criminal Defense Bar

Jeff Modisett, Attorney General of Indiana (1997-2000); Prosecuting Attorney, Marion County, Indiana (1991-1994); Deputy Chief of Public Corruption & Government Fraud Section, United States Attorney’s Office for the Central District of California, and Assistant United States Attorney for the Central District of California (1982-1988)

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David A. Moran, Director of the Michigan Innocence Clinic and Clinical Professor, University of Michigan Law School

Christine Mumma, Executive Director, North Carolina Center on Actual Innocence

Lynn H. Murray, Managing Partner, Shook, Hardy & Bacon LLP

Marissa C. Nardi, Senior Staff Attorney, Children's Rights, Inc.

John N. Nassikas, Assistant United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Virginia (1991-1995)

Radha Natarajan, Executive Director, New England Innocence Project

William Nettles, United States Attorney for the District of South Carolina (2010-2016)

Peter Neufeld, Co-Founder, Innocence Project

Erica Newland, Attorney-Adviser, United States Department of Justice, Office of Legal Counsel (2016-2018)

Theresa A. Newman, Charles S. Rhyne Clinical Professor of Law and Co-Director of the Duke Law Wrongful Convictions Clinic, Duke University School of Law

David W. Ogden, Deputy Attorney General of the United States (2009)

Brendan O'Neill, Chief Defender, Delaware Office of Defense Services

Susan Opotow, Ph.D., Professor, John Jay College of Criminal Justice, City University of New York

Peter J. Orput, Washington County Attorney, Minnesota (2011-present); Assistant Hennepin County Attorney, Minnesota (2006-2011); General Counsel, Minnesota Department of Corrections (2004-2006); Deputy Attorney General of Minnesota (2001-2004); Assistant Attorney General, Minnesota (1999-2001); Assistant Dakota County Attorney, Dakota County, Minnesota (1997-1999); Assistant Washington County Attorney, Washington County, Minnesota (1990-1997); Assistant Carver County Attorney, Carver County, Minnesota (1989-1990); Assistant Mille Lacs County Attorney, Mille Lacs County, Minnesota (1988-1989)

Mark Osler, Professor and Robert and Marion Short Distinguished Chair in Law, University of St. Thomas School of Law

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Jee Park, Executive Director, Innocence Project New Orleans (IPNO)

Atzimba Parra, Project Coordinator, The Exoneration Project

Terry L. Pechota, United States Attorney for the District of South Dakota (1979-1981)

Michael L. Piaskowski, Exoneree (Wisconsin, 5 years and 11 months in prison)

Sister Helen Prejean, C.S.J., Roman Catholic sister, author, and anti-death penalty advocate

Charles J. Press, Director of the Budd Innocence Center, University of Texas at Austin School of Law

Eve Brensike Primus, Yale Kamisar Collegiate Professor of Law, University of Michigan Law School

Christina Quaranta, Deputy Director, Connecticut Juvenile Justice Alliance

Hannah Quirk, Reader in Criminal Law, King's College London; Case Review Manager at the Criminal Cases Review Commission (2001-2005)

Mark Rabil, Director of the Wake Forest Innocence & Justice Clinic and Clinical Professor of Law, Wake Forest University School of Law

Maria F. Ramiu, Senior Staff Attorney, Youth Law Center

Jonathan Rapping, Professor of Law and Director of the Criminal Justice Certificate Program, Atlanta's John Marshall Law School

Allison D. Redlich, Ph.D., Professor of Criminology, Law and Society at George Mason University; President-Elect of the American Psychology-Law Society, Division 41 of the American Psychological Association

Heather Renwick, Legal Director, The Campaign for the Fair Sentencing of Youth

N. Dickon Reppucci, Ph.D., Professor Emeritus of Psychology, University of Virginia

Maryse H. Richards, Ph.D., Professor of Clinical Psychology, Loyola University Chicago

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Kevin Ring, President, Families Against Mandatory Minimums

Roland G. Riopelle, Assistant United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York (1991-1998)

Dennis P. Riordan, Principal, Riordan & Horgan

Jacques Rivera, Exoneree (Illinois, 21 years in prison)

Anthony Robinson, Exoneree (Texas, 10 years in prison)

Jennifer Rodriguez, Executive Director, Youth Law Center

Rachael Rollins, District Attorney, Suffolk County, Massachusetts (2019-present); Assistant United States Attorney for the District of Massachusetts (2007-2011)

Lori Ross, Chief Executive Officer, FosterAdopt Connect

David Rudolf, Principal, Rudolf Widenhouse

Heidi Rummel, Co-Director, Post-Conviction Justice Project, University of Southern California Gould School of Law (2006-present); Assistant United States Attorney for the Central District of California (1996-2006); Assistant United States Attorney for the District of Columbia (1994-1996)

Melissa Russano, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Criminal Justice, Roger Williams University

Fredric Saecker, Exoneree (Wisconsin, 7 years in prison)

Anjan Sahni, Co-Chief of Terrorism and International Narcotics, Chief of Securities and Commodities Fraud, United States Attorney's Office for the Southern District of New York (2005-2015)

Elie Salamon, Associate, Arnold & Porter Kaye Scholer LLP

Karen Salekin, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Psychology, University of Alabama

Mary Ann Scali, Executive Director, National Juvenile Defender Center

Barry Scheck, Co-Founder, Innocence Project

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Center on Wrongful Convictions

Kyle C. Scherr, Professor of Psychology, Central Michigan University; Associate Editor, *Law and Human Behavior*

Marc Schindler, Executive Director, Justice Policy Institute

Vincent Schiraldi, Co-Director of the Justice Lab, Columbia University; Commissioner of the New York City Department of Probation (2010-2014); Director of the Washington, DC Department of Youth Rehabilitation Services (2005-2010)\*

Barry C. Schneider, Judge, Superior Court of Maricopa County, Arizona (1986-2007)

Jeffrey Selbin, Clinical Professor of Law, University of California Berkeley School of Law\*

David W. Shapiro, United States Attorney for the Northern District of California (2001-2002); Chief, Criminal Division, United States Attorney's Office for the Northern District of California (1998-2001); Assistant United States Attorney for the Northern District of California (1995-1998); Assistant United States Attorney for the District of Arizona (1992-1995); Chief, Narcotics Section, United States Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of New York (1988-1990); Assistant United States Attorney for the Eastern District of New York (1986-1992)

Maria Regina Shepherd, Exoneree (Canada, 8 months in prison)

Mark L. Shurtleff, Attorney General of Utah (2001-2013)

Jeffrey Singer, Co-Founder, Segal McCambridge Singer & Mahoney, Ltd.

David Singleton, Executive Director, Ohio Justice & Policy Center

Jeffrey B. Sklaroff, Assistant United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York (1989-1994)

Abbe Smith, Professor of Law and Director of the Criminal Defense and Prisoner Advocacy Clinic, Georgetown University Law Center

Gregory H. Smith, Attorney General of New Hampshire (1980-1984); Deputy Attorney General of New Hampshire (1978-1980); Assistant Attorney General and Chief, Criminal Division, New Hampshire (1976-1978)

Carrie Sperling, Co-Director, Wisconsin Innocence Project, University of Wisconsin-Madison School of Law

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Jeffrey E. Stone, Chair Emeritus, McDermott Will & Emery; Assistant United States Attorney and Deputy Chief, Criminal Receiving and Appellate Division, United States Attorney's Office for the Northern District of Illinois (1986-1991); Fellow, American College of Trial Lawyers

Thomas L. Strickland, United States Attorney, District of Colorado (1999-2001)

Jason Strong, Exoneree (Illinois, 15.5 years in prison)

Shane Sturman, Chief Executive Officer, Wicklander-Zulawski & Associates

Marty Tankleff, J.D., Exoneree (New York, 17 years in prison)

Christopher Tapp, Exoneree (Idaho, 20 years in prison)

David Thompson, Vice President, Wicklander-Zulawski & Associates

Craig Trocino, Director of the Miami Law Innocence Clinic, University of Miami School of Law

Terrence J. Truax, Managing Partner, Jenner & Block LLP\*

Andrew Tutt, Attorney-Adviser, Office of Legal Counsel, United States Department of Justice (2015-2017)

Joyce Vance, United States Attorney for the Northern District of Alabama (2009-2017); Chief, Appellate Division, United States Attorney's Office for the Northern District of Alabama (2004-2009); Assistant United States Attorney for the Northern District of Alabama, Criminal and Appellate Divisions (1991-2004)

Melba J. T. Vasquez, Ph.D., ABPP, President of the American Psychological Association (2011)

Michael VonAllmen, Exoneree (Kentucky, 28 years in prison)

Randee J. Waldman, Clinical Professor of Law and Director of the Juvenile Defender Clinic at the Barton Child Law and Policy Center, Emory Law School

Terry Wanzer, Exoneree (Georgia, 8 years in prison)

Mike Ware, Executive Director, Innocence Project of Texas



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Kendrick Washington, Youth Policy Counsel, American Civil Liberties Union of Washington\*

Frances Watson, Clinical Professor of Law and Director of the Indiana University McKinney Wrongful Conviction Clinic, Indiana University Robert H. McKinney School of Law

Morris “Sandy” Weinberg, Jr., Assistant United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York (1979-1985)

Robert N. Weiner, Associate Deputy Attorney General, United States Department of Justice (2010-2012); Senior Counsel, White House Counsel’s Office (1997-1998)

Kate Weisburd, Associate Professor of Law, George Washington University Law School; former Director of the East Bay Juvenile Clinic at University of California-Berkeley School of Law

Lawrence T. White, Ph.D., Professor Emeritus of Psychology, Beloit College

Joel C. Wieneke, Senior Staff Attorney, Indiana Public Defender Council

Angela Williams, President/Founder, Mothers Against Murderers Association Inc.

Jennifer L. Woolard, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Psychology and Adjunct Professor of Law, Georgetown University

Steven Wright, Co-Director of the Wisconsin Innocence Project, University of Wisconsin-Madison School of Law

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\* Signatories designated with an asterisk expressed a wish to sign in their individual capacities; their institutions are included for identification purposes only.