



PARDON PROJECT
STEERING COMMITTEE

Rev. Dr. Michelle Anne Simmons, Chair
Evan Figueroa-Vargas, Vice Chair
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By email

December 15, 2020

Honorable Tom Wolf, Governor
Harrisburg, PA 17120

Dear Governor Wolf:

On September 14 and October 16, 2020, I wrote and asked you to pledge to do your best to shorten the time you were taking to sign pardons. Every person waiting for you to act has already waited at least two years for the state to investigate them and their situations. They only get to you after the Board of Pardons – often unanimously – votes in their favor after holding a public hearing on them.

When I first wrote, you had just taken more than eleven months to sign those who the Board had recommended to you the September before. You have not signed any more since then last August. By our count, ***there are 307 pardons on your desk just waiting for your signature, not counting the 150 that were recommended last week.*** 8 of the 307 date back to last March, more than 9 months ago. That, Sir, is shameful.

These are the easiest decisions you will ever make as Governor – yet you are taking the absolute longest time to make them. The people who are waiting to be pardoned are good people: they completed their sentences years if not decades ago, and they have been living in our communities, doing the best they can for themselves and their families. But their pasts are holding them back from their potentials.

You didn't answer my letters, so we started a petition: <http://chnng.it/V6rv4VcmnH>. ***In just three weeks, more than 3,000 people have signed this call for social justice:***

Dear Governor Wolf:

I join with the Pardon Project Steering Committee in calling on you to:

- 1) sign the hundreds of pardons that have been sitting on your desk for so many months, and give them and their families, finally, the Second Chance that they have earned, and**
- 2) include signing pardons in the forefront of your duties so that never again will anyone have to wait more than 30 days for you, or any Governor, to act.**

We know you are a good man. You end up signing almost every single pardon. But you are taking so, so, so long, when it should take you no time at all. ***Please hear our call – now raised by more than three thousand voices.*** Answer our petition. Do what you know is right. Light the candle of hope.

Thank you.

Rev. Dr. Michelle A. Simmons

Rev. Dr. Michelle Anne Simmons, Chair
cc: Lt. Gov. John Fetterman, Chair, Board of Pardons
Brandon Flood, Secretary, Board of Pardons

The Pardon Project is an initiative of Philadelphia Lawyers for Social Equity (PLSE)
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