

February 28, 2022

Dear Mr. Grote,

My name is Rose Marie Dinkins. I am a 74-year-old lifer who has been incarcerated for 50 years, a term that exceeds minimum life sentences in most states by 30 years.

My accomplishments are many. I have been dedicated to pursuing my education since I arrived at SCI Muncy in 1972. In 1974, I earned my GED. I then matriculated into the cosmetology program, earning my license at Empire Beauty School in 1976. I took my practical with members of the Wilkes Barre Community.

I went on to complete courses through Bloomsburg University, Penn State, Bucknell, and Pennsylvania Business Institute. I earned an Associate's degree and became a certified paralegal. I am also certified in Automotive Mechanics.

I have taken advantage of the opportunities available to me to make my time as productive as possible. While completing educational and character development courses, I have maintained consistent employment in several positions - dental

assistant, infirmary worker, tutor, kitchen worker, sewing factory worker (1994-2019), activities department detail, and maintenance detail. I possess many marketable skills.

I have had time to reflect on my decisions and the circumstances that led to my incarceration. I've learned a great deal about myself and grown tremendously. I have worked to uplift and counsel my peers. I have maintained open lines of communication with my family through phone calls, letters, and visits. I have remained positive through this experience, grounded in my faith and encouraged by my supporters.

I believe laws should be passed to abolish DBI sentences because it implies that people are not capable of change. It diminishes our relationships with family. When I was arrested, my 4 children were toddlers. Now they are in their 50's with children and grandchildren of their own. I have great-grandchildren I have never seen. DBI sentences condemn individuals for life based on one mistake, one exercise of poor judgement, one horrible day that seals their fate no matter how many certificates or degrees they earn. DBI sentences <sup>100</sup> make us strangers

to our families, no matter how hard we try to stay in touch. These sentences provide no relief for reformed individuals. The justice system is meant to deter crime, to rehabilitate violent individuals, to prevent subsequent offenses, but there has to be some room for mercy.

When someone violates traffic rules and receives a citation, we don't deny them a license for life. We allow them to pay a fee, take a class, and drive again. The American justice system values some lives more than others. Police officers are held in such high esteem that their deaths nearly always result in a DBI sentence. Why do manslaughter, self-defense, and even 3<sup>rd</sup> degree murder fall out of consideration when the victim is wearing a blue uniform? Yet officers who kill are put on desk duty and rarely prosecuted. The whole world rioted for justice for George Floyd and Derrick Chauvin still avoided a DBI sentence with his lengthy record of police misconduct. Because he took an oath to protect and serve, he will have a chance to be paroled even though he knelt on a handcuffed man's neck for over 8 minutes. Statistics show

that persons of color serving DBI sentences far outnumber their white counterparts with similar crimes. These discriminatory sentencing practices have gone on for far too long. No one deserves to die in prison who has made the effort to change for the better.

I would implore the members of the United Nations to imagine becoming a shadow, a memory while still alive. I would ask them to imagine seeing an empty space in every family photo where they should have been. I would ask them how many photo albums are enough. I have been missing from family celebrations for over 50 years. I have paid my debt to society with interest and I want nothing more than to reunite with my loved ones.

Granted freedom, I would become an advocate for other women serving life sentences and fight to eliminate DBI sentences. I would spend my twilight years with my children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. Hopefully, the esteemed members of the United Nations can put a face on mercy. Thank you for your thoughtful consideration and your interest

in my experience.

Sincerely,  
Rose Marie Perkins