

**BEFORE THE GOVERNOR AND CABINET
OFFICE OF EXECUTIVE CLEMENCY**

**PETITION FOR CLEMENCY
COMMUTATION OF SENTENCE**

In accordance with Florida Constitution, Article IV, Rules of Executive Clemency,
Section 4(d), 8(a), and Invocation of Rule 17

**IN SUPPORT OF
Michael J. Curls DC# 352276**

Case No: CF88-0018

Michael J. Curls DC# 352276
Marion Correctional Institution
PO Box 158
Lowell, FL 32663



STATE OF FLORIDA
OFFICE OF EXECUTIVE CLEMENCY

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S. MICHELLE WHITWORTH, COORDINATOR

Request for Review Application For Commutation of Sentence Only

COMMUTATION OF SENTENCE REQUIREMENTS: You are eligible to apply if you are serving a prison term of 5 years or more after you complete whichever of the following is greater: (a) one third of your prison term; (b) one half of your minimum mandatory sentence; or (c) 20 years of your life sentence. All applications received for prison terms of less than 5 years will be rejected.

DIRECTIONS: All required court documents must be attached to this application. Please refer to the "Court Documents Section" below for a list of required court documents. Please print all information on the application clearly. Unreadable applications, documents in sheet protectors, notebooks, and/or binders will be rejected. You may either staple or use binder clips to attach documents to your application.

- Commutation of Sentence (for Florida prison sentence of 5 years or longer)**
(Ineligible to apply if you were convicted in a federal, military, or out-of-state court.)

PERSONAL IDENTIFIERS SECTION

DIRECTIONS: All applicable personal identifiers must be completed, or the application will be rejected.

DC number: 352226

Name used when conviction(s) occurred: Michael Jeffrey Curtis

Current Name, if different: N/A

Mailing Address: Po Box 158 Lowell Marion Florida 32663
Street or P.O. Box City County State Zip

Date of Birth: 8/13/61 Sex: Male Female Social Security number: 265-61-0990

U.S. Citizen? Yes No Alien Registration number: _____

CHARGES/CONVICTIONS SECTION

DIRECTIONS: List each felony conviction for which you are seeking clemency. If you require more space, attach a separate sheet of paper listing the additional convictions. Do not fill out a separate clemency application form to list the additional information.

1. 6 armed robberies
2. 1 possession of firearm
3. 1 violation of probation
4. _____

COURT DOCUMENTS SECTION

DIRECTIONS: Section 940.04 of the Florida Statutes entitles you to obtain certified copies of various court documents from the applicable clerk of court free of charge. You **MUST ATTACH TO THIS APPLICATION** certified copies of court documents for **EACH** felony conviction for which you are seeking clemency. The application will be rejected if the required court documents are not attached. Court documents include:

1. Certified copy of the charging instrument (indictment, information, or warrant with supporting affidavit)
2. Judgment and sentence

Optional Supporting Documents: Only submit documents that are relevant to the clemency request. Do not submit pictures. Any submitted documents or material that are not relevant to the application for clemency will not be retained.

Applicant or Attorney Signature



Applicant or Attorney (required)

Date 1-28-2023

YOU DO NOT NEED AN ATTORNEY FOR THIS PROCESS. However, if you have chosen to be represented by an attorney for the clemency process, please provide the attorney name, address, and phone number.

Attorney Name

Address

Telephone Number

STATEMENT SECTION

DIRECTIONS: You may provide a statement regarding your clemency request that is limited to the space provided below. If the statement exceeds the space provided below, it will not be considered or retained.

- I was convicted of 6 armed robberies, with Williams Rule applied, resulting in one primary offense and 5 additional offenses, scoring 220 points and placing the guidelines sentencing range within the 9-12 years category, with no victim injury.
- I was sentenced to 6 consecutive life.
- I filed for commutation of sentence in 2005 and was denied in 2009.
- In 2015 I refiled and was informed that because my life sentences are consecutive I am no longer eligible to file for clemency through the regular procedure for 120 years.
- I am therefore hereby requesting Clemency Rule 17 review consideration for reasons of exceptional merit.

STATEMENT SECTION CONTINUED

- I have absolutely done the necessary work to achieve permanent positive change, from criminality to responsibility.
- I have not received a disciplinary report (DR) since 1999.
- I have been clean from drugs and alcohol for over 20 years.
- I have remained seriously involved with programs, participating, facilitating, training, and developing programs that work.
- I am in the process of developing a statewide Relational Assistance Service for at-risk youth intervention, and intend to continue that work upon release.

Please see Exhibits A thru M for credible verification of my meeting exceptional merit requirement for Rule 17 consideration for commutation of sentence.

Mailing Address: Office of Executive Clemency, 4070 Esplanade Way, Tallahassee, FL 32399-2450

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INTRODUCTION

COMES NOW, Petitioner Michael J. Curls, before the Executive Clemency Board, and hereby presents the following Petition for Clemency and Commutation of Sentence. Since all possible legal remedies have been exhausted and denied, and since Michael is serving six consecutive life sentences without eligibility for parole, clemency is his only avenue of release. Mr. Curls filed his first Petition for Clemency in 2005, which was denied in 2009. After waiting the mandated five years from the date of denial, he filed a second petition in 2014. Due to a rule revision requiring 12.5 years (later changed to 20 years) to be served on a life sentence prior to being eligible to file for clemency, and because Michael's life sentences are structured consecutively, the Clemency Office deemed that he must serve 120 years before being eligible to file another clemency petition through the regular procedure. This leaves Clemency Rule 17 as his only possible hope for consideration. Rule 17 states that any member of the Executive Clemency Board has the authority to bring any case before the Board for reasons of exceptional merit.

This year, 2023, Mr. Curls will be sixty-two years old and has already served more than thirty-five continuous years incarcerated in the Florida Department of Corrections on this conviction. His crimes were PTSD and addiction related armed robberies, none of which involved any physical injury to the victims. Other related charges included possession of a firearm and violation of probation for which he was sentenced to fifteen years. The sentencing guidelines score sheet placed Michael within the 9 to 12 years category. However, his sentence was an extremely upward departure from the recommended guidelines. (See Exhibit A, Sentencing Guidelines Score Sheet, and the Appendix, Information, Judgments, and Sentencing Records.)

Even though Michael did not physically harm anyone during the commission of his crimes, he understands the seriousness of his offenses and the many different facets of harm that he has caused. Furthermore, he has developed a deep remorse not only for his own victims, but also for all victims of crime. Mr. Curls knows that he deserved to be punished and has already been incarcerated for nearly forty years. As will henceforth be presented, his time in prison has been a journey of change, service, and exceptional achievements. He did the serious work necessary to transform himself, and then dedicated his life to helping others.

Therefore, because he is no longer eligible to file for clemency through the normal procedure, and based upon the reasons, merits, and mitigating information henceforth presented, Michael Curls comes now, praying for Clemency Rule 17 consideration, and respectfully requests commutation of sentence in order to facilitate his release from the Florida Department of Corrections.

HISTORY OF THE CASE

On December 19, 1977, when Michael Curls was sixteen years of age, his father was killed in an automobile accident. One year later, almost to the day, on December 21, 1978, Michael's mother was killed in a head-on collision. In each instance, Michael was permitted to view his parents' bodies—broken and bloody—leaving those haunting images firmly etched in his young mind. These events were so traumatic, especially at such a crucial developmental age, that Michael was eventually diagnosed as suffering from severe post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Numerous psychological evaluations attest that PTSD related issues were the primary cause of his addictions and criminal behavior.

The Court ruled that Michael Curls was an emancipated minor at 17 years of age, and set him loose with a quarter-million dollar estate. Having virtually no coping skills for such

emotional crisis, and without receiving the psychological treatment he needed, Michael attempted to escape his inner turmoil by self-medicating through drugs, alcohol, and prodigal living. His behaviors quickly led to trouble with the law. His behaviors have been characterized by psychologists as an unconscious cry for help. Yet, through it all, his court-appointed Guardian of Estate, Personal Representative, attorneys, and others were more concerned about swindling money out of his inheritance than helping him succeed.

In 1983, when Michael was only 21, he appeared before the Court for a technical violation of probation. Michael's fiancée had been brutally murdered. He got drunk and absconded from a restitution center. The charges for which Michael was on probation carried a maximum of 7 years in prison. The Court imposed two life sentences and fifteen years.

Entering the prison system at 22, with blond hair, blue eyes, only 140 pounds, and no light at the end of the tunnel, Michael was forced to defend himself against many of the most violent homosexual predators the State of Florida has ever incarcerated. He served five extremely stressful years, constantly contending against terrifying and deadly threats and confrontations, attempted rapes, stabbings, beatings, and other adversities. At one point, he suffered a nervous breakdown and was hospitalized in a psychiatric ward. Shortly thereafter, his life sentences were reversed and Michael was unexpectedly released from his illegal sentence.

Michael was released on November 11, 1987, with no work release or transitional opportunities. He had no money, no home, was still a drug addict and alcoholic, and his prison experience only exacerbated his already severe PTSD. His release, under those circumstances can in no way be considered a break, chance, or opportunity. Michael was released much worse instead of better, due to no fault of his own. Positive change and character development had not been an option for him. Instead, he had been forced to survive the most brutal and perverted

circumstances imaginable. He was released a recidivist waiting to happen, and it happened very quickly.

Only 44 days after his release, during the anniversary week of his parents' deaths, Michael committed the first of a string of robberies (psychologists diagnosed this as a PTSD-promted "anniversary reaction"). On January 2, 1988, he was arrested and convicted of six armed robberies. A psychological evaluation was ordered by the Court prior to sentencing, which explains Michael's mental condition leading up to and including the crimes for which he is still incarcerated. (See Exhibit B, Court Testimony of Dr. Thomas McClane, M.D.)

Michael asserted to the Court in his statement prior to sentencing that Dr. McClane's evaluation had enlightened him. For the first time, and in light of his own destructive behaviors, Michael was beginning to realize the true depth of his psychological problems. He was determined to do whatever was necessary to seek the help he needed and rehabilitate himself completely; to recover from his addictions, eliminate his criminality, and stop creating victims.

MICHAEL'S TRANSITION

At his sentencing, Michael Curls pled only for a little light at the end of the tunnel—a release date he could work towards and for which he could prepare himself. The guidelines called for 9 to 12 years (Exhibit A), but once again, he was sentenced to grow old and die in prison, with no eligibility for parole. This time, however, he understood that his real enemies resided within his own mind, and he was determined to defeat them all.

For someone like Michael Curls, with the tragedy and trauma he had suffered, and the extent of his PTSD, coupled with being incarcerated in prison environments that are not conducive to rehabilitation and positive change, achieving those objectives, as well as complete recovery from all addictions, was no small feat. He readily admits that his change process was

not a smooth or easy transition. It involved huge difficulties, and even a couple of hard falls along the way. However, he kept picking himself up and taking another step in the right direction; kept seeking the help he knew he needed; kept striving, learning, and growing in character. Michael successfully completed virtually every pertinent program available to him, including a twelve-month Tier 4 drug and alcohol treatment program. He involved himself with AA and NA twelve steps programs, Anger Management, faith-based programs, and much more. Furthermore, Michael Curls did indeed conquer the difficult challenge of change, and then dedicated his life to helping others. (See Exhibit C, Affidavit of Ron McAndrew, Prison and Jail Consultant.) Michael also did the psychological work necessary to heal his mind and rehabilitate himself from his post-traumatic stress disorder (See Exhibit D, Affidavit of Dr. James McGovern, Psy.D., PLLD.)

EARLY ACHIEVEMENTS

As described by Ron McAndrew in his affidavit, Michael's transitional change process involved a great deal of service work. Excelling in programs development, facilitation, and training, Mr. Curls has invested more than 30 years in a serious and determined effort to help others. His efforts have reached far beyond the prison environment, to not only assist his fellow inmates change from criminality to responsibility, but to create a safer society in ways that are truly exceptional and needed. The following presents just a few of his exceptional achievements:

THE ANSWER To Crime and Youth Crime in America

In 1993, Michael helped start the first Lifers' Group in the State of Florida at Sumter Correctional Institution. He was elected as the organization's first Chairman of Youth Awareness. Serving in that capacity, he developed a passion and concern for at-risk youth

intervention. Through this work, Michael began to develop an original four-phase facilitation process that proved most effective through three separate initiatives: An In-House Youth Awareness Program, a Boot Camp Counseling Program, and a Prison Tour Program that was approved for statewide expansion through the Florida Department of Corrections.

At the time, Michael thought the Lifers' Group was doing all they could in the area of Youth Awareness. Then the Columbine High School massacre occurred, and he realized that the effectiveness of his relational concept needed to extend beyond the prisons. The empathetic relational services that only ex-offenders can contribute to youth intervention needed to be more available to counselors during the early intervention process. Michael has been pursuing the implementation of this vision for thirty years, while school shootings, mass murders, and other violent crimes continue to escalate and plague our nation. Michael asserts, "Had a trained Relational Service Provider been involved with the intervention process of Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold—the Columbine shooters—chances are good that the murderous intent that raged within those boys would have been brought to light. They then could have gotten the help they needed, and fourteen kids and one teacher may not have died that day. And many other school shootings and violent crimes since then could have been prevented as well."

It took ten years for Michael to get THE ANSWER on paper. After submitting several proposals for implementation of the pilot program, he was contacted by a psychologist in Kentucky. Dr. Regan Wilson wrote, "I am writing to you because it has come to my attention that you may have an innovative plan to help children and youth that are high-risk for committing crime, substance abuse, truancy, and antisocial behavior. I am a Juvenile Justice Counselor under contract to seek out current offenders who may be helpful in suggesting solutions that emphasize early intervention and prevention, and teamwork among ex-offenders,

courts, counselors, educators, mental health professionals, parents, and mentors. If your proposal meets the above mentioned criteria, please submit it to me in full for review and possible implementation and funding.”

After reviewing nearly one hundred youth intervention concepts from all over the nation, Dr. Wilson recommended THE ANSWER for national implementation through the Department of Juvenile Justice. Upon his release, Michael Curls intends to continue his work with the development of THE ANSWER’s state- and nationwide Relational Assistance Service for at-risk youth intervention. (See Exhibit E, THE ANSWER TO CRIME AND YOUTH CRIME IN AMERICA, including the Facilitator Training Initiative, Relational Assistance Service Initiative, Counselor Support Program, and the Progressive Programs Manual.)

The DIRECT Program

Along with his passion for helping our nation’s youth, and his concern for all victims of crime, Michael Curls has also developed a strong compassion for his fellow prisoners, especially those who are controlled by addictions and criminality and do not know how to break free. Having experienced, himself, the darkest depths of these psychological strongholds, and having done the work to achieve rehabilitation and recovery, Michael has dedicated the past thirty years to educating himself and helping to facilitate responsible change and character development to others.

In 2002, Mr. Curls was introduced to a program called DIRECT (an acronym for Direct Involvement Reduces the Effects of Criminal Thinking). This program teaches participants to understand the psychology of criminality. It also provides the means to identify, deter, and correct criminal thinking errors, processes and patterns. Along with his foundational faith in God, this information proffered the mental tools that helped Michael heal and renew his mind

more so than any other information he had found. In 2006, retired FDC Deputy Secretary Timothy H. Cannon (who was Warden of Hardee Correctional Institution at that time) appointed Michael as Program Coordinator over the DIRECT Program. Mr. Curls invested a year developing and writing a much improved revised DIRECT Program format. This format was approved and accredited by FDC, and was assigned the course code number RCT-115. Michael has now facilitated this important program to prisoners for more twenty years, introducing thousands to its life changing information. (See Exhibit E, THE ANSWER, Part Three, Progressive Programs Manual, Program Four, the DIRECT Program.)

Re-Entry Assistance Program LifePath Group Project

After completing the DIRECT Program format, Michael also wrote the Re-Entry Assistance Program in hopes of helping FDC reduce recidivism. This concept is actually a programs networking system designed to progress offenders through the various levels of a quality change process, until the process of change is complete and responsibility is achieved. Shortly after completing the written work, the new title of LifePath Group Project was attributed to the concept. Sponsorship was attained and implementation was approved. Michael also wrote and contributed the Facilitator and Mentor Training Initiative to the LifePath effort.

As of 2014, with Mr. Curls in the Coordinator's position, LifePath was in its fourth year of development; it was 549 members strong, and had more than 500 inmates involved in fifteen active programs and classes on a weekly basis. During a time when serious problems with cell phones, violence, and gang activity were escalating, the Lifepath Group Project produced the largest, most well behaved, and lowest security risk block of inmates and Hardee Correctional Institution.

For more than three decades, Michael Curls has been highly involved in leadership, coordination and facilitation of programs, as well as personal mentoring. As with the Lifers' Group at Sumter Correctional Institution, the Lifepath Group Project also succeeded and progressed to become an approved FDC parole eligible program initiative. (See Exhibit F, Re-Entry Assistance Program Flow Chart, LifePath Group Project, Accreditation Proposal and Support Letters.)

Along with Michael's passion for programs development, he also became a prolific writer and author of many publishable works. His writings are intelligent, insightful, motivating, inspirational and instructional. (See Exhibit G, Articles Written by Michael Curls.)

PRIDE ENTERPRISES JOB SKILLS TRAINING

When Mr. Curls sensed that his service and contributions were complete at Hardee C.I., he requested and received a good adjustment transfer back to Sumter C.I., where his positive journey began twenty years earlier. Upon arrival at Sumter, he immediately landed a job at PRIDE Central Florida Graphics, where he invested five years in the following real world educational and vocational training:

- 2015—2019: Purchasing Agent, responsible for processing all purchase orders; pricing through vendor communications (dozens of daily e-mail and phone interactions); troubleshooting with Corporate Accounts Payable Department; receiving; invoicing; meeting deadlines
- 2014—2015: Job Planning Department and Forms Management; processing sales and production orders; coordinating and detailing various aspects of production; Customer Service training and communications
- Production: GS38 Envelope Converter Operator

- Shipping and Receiving: Experience in all aspects, including Forklift Operator
- Computer Skills: Microsoft Dynamics Database; Access; Word; Excel; and other software applications
- Certifications: Purchasing Clerk; Data Entry Specialist; Customer Service Specialist; Telemarketer; Forklift Operator (See Exhibit H, Partial Record of Certifications and Achievements.)

TWO-YEAR PAROLE ELIGIBLE LIFERS' PROGRAM

Michael was sentenced in 1988, when life sentences for anything other than capital first-degree murder or capital child molestation where excluded from eligibility for parole. In other words, since Michael did not kill or physically harm anyone during the commission of his robberies, he is not eligible for parole consideration. Had he murdered someone, he would have been eligible for parole. This disproportional and unjust sentencing system was in place for eleven years, from 1983 to 1994, when parole was abolished for all life sentences.

Nevertheless, in 2017, even without the hope for possible parole that murderers and child molesters had been given, Mr. Curls voluntarily enrolled in the two-year parole eligible Lifers' Program at Sumter Correctional Institution. While participating in the program, he also served as a facilitator for the DIRECT Program. Michael successfully completed the parole eligible program and graduated in 2019. This program actually evolved from the original Lifers' Group that Michael helped start in 1993. (See Exhibit I, Two-Year Parole Eligible Lifers' Program Certificate.)

2021 THROUGH 2023 EXCEPTIONAL SERVICE ACHIEVEMENTS

If Michael's Petition for Clemency and Commutation of Sentence ended with the above early achievements, it would be more than enough to establish the exceptional merit requirement for Clemency Rule 17 consideration. However, his steadfast and continuous commitment to service and helping others is not just what he does; it is evidence of who he is. As impressive as his previously presented achievements are, Michael's 2021 through 2023 achievements and service work has been even more productive in terms of positively affecting a vast number of lives.

FDC MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

After completing the Parole Eligible Lifers' Program and serving as its DIRECT facilitator, Michael submitted an application to help start the Florida Department of Corrections Mentorship Program. This new initiative is structured and designed to reduce recidivism for first time, short sentence offenders entering the prison system. The objective is to provide these first time commitments with a learning environment and opportunities more conducive for positive change than the typically more violent prison situation. The Mentorship Program also provides long-time experienced inmates who have proven that they have changed to mentor and lead these new commitments through the learning process.

After careful screening and review by the FDC Central Office, only thirty-two inmate mentors were initially selected from the entire prison system to help start this program. Michael Curls was one of those inmates. (See Exhibit J, 2021 through 2023 Exceptional Service Achievements.)

QUALIFIED FOR INCENTIVIZED PRISON ENVIRONMENT

After his service with the Mentorship Program, Michael requested placement in one of the newly established incentivized prisons, specifically, Marion Correctional Institution. To qualify for FDC incentivized housing, inmates must be well-adjusted, discipline free for at least two years, and programs oriented. Mr. Curls arrived at Marion C.I. in 2020 and received an immediate request to assist in programs facilitation by those he had worked with over the years.

20 YEARS OF SERVICE AS DIRECT FACILITATOR

As soon as Michael arrived at Marion C.I., his extensive experience and reputation prompted a position as a DIRECT facilitator. This profound program continues to teach offenders to identify, deter, and correct their criminal thinking errors, processes, and patterns. Mr. Curls has now reached the twenty (20) years milestone of facilitating the DIRECT Program, which prompted the Lifers' Positive Transformation Group to honor him with a Lasting Impact Award for his outstanding and selfless service. (See Exhibit J, 2021 through 2023 Exceptional Service Achievements.)

FDC FAITH AND CHARACTER BASED PROGRAM

While teaching the DIRECT Program twice per week, Michael enrolled in and successfully graduated the 1,220-hour FDC Faith and Character Based Program (FCB), Phase 1. He not only completed the 16-class curriculum, but also contributed and taught his own Cognitive Character Building class. Graduating with 1,350 hours, Mr. Curls has progressed to Phase 2 of the FCB program, which includes another 1,220-hour curriculum. He continues to teach and mentor others at every opportunity. (See Exhibit J, 2021 through 2023 Exceptional Service Achievements.)

LIFERS' POSITIVE TRANSFORMATION GROUP

While pursuing all subsequent endeavors, Michael also joined forces with the Lifers' Positive Transformation Group. As he completed the Lifers' Group sponsored Prisoner Re-Entry Program (PREP) 10-course curriculum, as well as numerous other classes and workshops, Mr. Curls was appointed as the organization's Facilitator Training Coordinator. (See Exhibit J, 2021 through 2023 Exceptional Service Achievements.)

**THE ANSWER
To Crime and Youth Crime in America**

**Facilitator Training Initiative
Relational Assistance Service Training Initiative
Counselor Support Program
Progressive Programs Manual**

With institutional support and strong community volunteer sponsorship, the Lifers' Group and Marion Correctional Institution provided Mr. Curls with the long-awaited opportunity for the implementation of the training bases for THE ANSWER TO CRIME AND YOUTH CRIME IN AMERICA. After more than 30 years of diligent work, Michael's vision for THE ANSWER is finally beginning to manifest for at-risk youth intervention.

Even before THE ANSWER's first phase of training was complete through the Lifer's Group sponsored Facilitator Training Initiative, Mr. Curls was asked to also provide this innovative opportunity to the SAGE Personal Development programs network as well. With graduates progressing to the Relational Assistance Service Training Initiative, to earn their professional certifications, THE ANSWER's relational services for at-risk youth intervention now has three training bases producing highly skilled mentors and facilitators who will return to

society as valuable assets contributing their much-needed services for the purpose of crime prevention and creating a safer society. (See Exhibit J, 2021 through 2023 Exceptional Service Achievements, THE ANSWER TO CRIME AND YOUTH CRIME IN AMERICA presentation and graduation photos.)

CHARACTER REFERENCES AND LETTERS OF SUPPORT

Michael often expresses and displays his deep remorse, not only for the victims left in the wake of his own past behaviors, but also for all victims of crime. He expresses remorse not only in words, but even more so through his intensive work with thousands of hardcore criminals and offenders in pursuit of positive change. When asked, “Why change?” Michael answers, “So we never hurt anybody else ever again.” Moreover, many have recognized his sincerity, consistency, and determination to help and serve others.

Michael has held many positions of responsibility, including his service as a Transition Aide, assisting FDC with its Re-Entry initiatives by helping to prepare prisoners for successful transition back into society. Mr. James Baggett, one of Michael’s Transition Supervisors, writes the following on Michael’s behalf:

“I am writing this letter in support for Michael Curls’ clemency. In the two years I’ve known Michael, I have seen that he is a sincere Christian, a follower of God; he is dedicated to his faith and helping others. I wholeheartedly support his efforts toward gaining clemency, and I believe that Michael Curls would be a valuable asset to society.”

John Gillespie, another of Michael's Transition Supervisors, writes:

"Michael Curls was one of my teachers and an excellent one. You don't know Michael's heart as well as I do and he is a very sincere person and does not play games."

Ken Cooper, now deceased, who was well known in corrections as a consultant, and for his work in transitional housing and prison ministry, asserts in his letter of support:

"I offer my highest recommendation for Michael Curls . . . He demonstrates the attitude of a changed man and we have seen the depth of Michael's remorse and contrition for his crimes . . . Michael Curls fits the profile perfectly of inmates who readjusts to society and does well upon release."

Charles "Chuck" Colson, Director of Prison Fellowship, now deceased, who was the first to recommend that Michael file for clemency, corresponded with one of Michael's advocates, and offered his support by writing:

"Let me know when you need my help. I'm happy to make calls as long as the lawyer assures us that they are not considered *ex parte* interference with an administrative process."

Ann Rogers, another of Michael's longtime advocates writes:

"I have known Michael Curls for a decade and a half . . . I have watched him battle and persevere through rejection after rejection as he has tried to gain his freedom. And, I have seen him use those struggles to not only improve himself, but the lives of others . . . Inside the prison walls, Michael impacts hundreds of men; outside the prison walls, he could impact thousands of young men."

Wesley Collins was a student/participant in one of the programs Michael facilitated.

Wesley was inspired to write his own letter of support, which includes the following:

“Michael Curls is the lead facilitator of the DIRECT program here at Hardee C.I. While participating in that program I saw and experienced Mike convey the information in a way that stressed to us the importance of change. During my incarceration, I have heard many men say, “I’m not the man I used to be.” But I believe wholeheartedly that Mike is not the man that he once was. For over 18 months, I have observed Mike on a daily basis. He has never wavered, nor has he vacillated, in his commitment to doing what is right. Even in times that I knew that he was hurting deeply, Mike took the time to coach me and counsel me in my struggle for change. When lesser men would have been ruled by their emotions and reverted to criminal behavior, Mike was steadfast in his determination to think through each situation thoroughly and plan the best course of action for his family and for himself. Mike modeled true change for us.”

R. Bruce Trottman was another participant of one of Michael’s programs that taught students to understand, identify, deter, and correct their criminal thinking errors. Mr. Trottman writes the following:

“I realize how absurd I must sound when I tell you that there is someone in here, in prison, who is not only a genuine man of God, but a powerful and gifted communicator. He has a special ability and insight in a field that is desperately needed today. His passion is for troubled or criminal youth. He has an exceptional understanding of how troubled teens think. He reaches

places in them that few, if any, have ever reached, or can reach. In fact, he is making a serious impact on the adult population. He makes change welcoming and even desirable. Hence, many hardened criminals are becoming responsible inmates, for those who are still in prison; and responsible law-abiding citizens, for those who have been released . . . If you could only hear Mr. Curls speak to a group, you would begin to see some of what Mr. Curls has to offer. He is crisp, sharp, and goes to the heart of the matter . . . He has the potential to alter this country's youth crime problem."

Officer R. Williams was the Education Department Supervisor and the lead sponsor for the *LifePath Group Project* at Hardee C.I. He was one of Michael's direct supervisors, and very involved in the work that Mr. Curls did on a daily basis. Officer Williams provides the following character reference in his letter of support:

"During the past twelve (12) years—the whole time he's been at Hardee C.I.—Michael Curls has consistently conducted himself with integrity and excellent moral character. He is responsible and dependable, and he does not compromise in doing the right thing. Inmate Curls has earned the respect of both inmates and staff as well . . . Based in my experience in corrections, I know *game* when I see it. Based on what I see and know about Michael Curls, I believe he's the real deal and deserves another chance at freedom."

Many more people have contributed character references and letters of support for Michael's clemency. All of them confirm absolute trust and belief in Michael's rehabilitation, steadfast responsibility, dependability, and outstanding service to others. (See Exhibit K, Character References and Letters of Support.)

WHY CLEMENCY SHOULD BE GRANTED

1. The Nature of the Crimes: Michael's crimes were committed in such a manner that no physical injury occurred, and there is evidence showing that he did not intend to harm anyone. In fact, when confronted with resistance, Michael actually fled the scene. These are not the crimes of a hardened criminal. They are the acts of a troubled young man whose life was plagued with tragedy that resulted in psychological disturbance and addictions. Michael knows this does not excuse his past behavior. However, it should provide reason to militate against forcing him to spend the rest of his life in prison.

2. Remorse: Michael's deep remorse is sincerely expressed often, not only in words, but in actions. Teaching criminals to develop true remorse—helping them understand the depth of pain that they have caused—are essential elements of the change process he facilitates. However, in order for Michael to teach this to others, it first had to become real within himself.

3. Prison Record: Though Michael faltered on occasion during his struggle to overcome his past problems and rehabilitate himself, he finally conquered his demons and achieved true change through faith, self-sacrifice, and hard work. His last disciplinary report (DR) was in 1999. He has been drug and alcohol free for more than twenty years. His work record consistently exceeds all expectations and he has developed vocational and other skills such that employment upon release will not be a problem.

4. Amount of Time Served: Michael has been incarcerated for a total of forty (40) years, since 1983, and has served all of this time with virtually no light at the end of the tunnel and no tangible hope of ever being released. He was twenty-two (22) when he first came to prison; he is sixty-two (62) now. Nevertheless, he dedicated his life to doing the work he needed to do, to become the man he needs to be in order to succeed in society. He also dedicated his life to

helping others do the same. Michael has already paid more than a fair price for his crimes, and plans to pay even more in service when released.

5. Rehabilitation: It is clear and obvious to everyone who knows Michael Curls that he has achieved an unwavering level of responsible maturity and exemplary character. His character development is based and built upon his faith in God. He sought the help he needed, educated himself, and has invested many years employing a process of change that worked. The reality of his rehabilitation is displayed in everything he does, and is verified by the psychological evaluation and affidavit by Dr. James McGovern (Exhibit D).

PARTIAL RELEASE PLAN

Michael Curls has a large and committed support group of family, friends, and advocates who are willing and able to assist him with housing, transportation, provisions, transitional needs, and any help he needs in pursuit in his service goals. Furthermore, should the Executive Clemency Board believe that a Transitional Housing Program be a condition of release, Michael has secured acceptance letters from several FDC approved Transitional Housing facilities. (See Exhibit L, Transitional Housing Acceptance Letters.)

Some of his post-release goals are listed as follows:

Short-term (First Year):

- Assimilate to society and increased responsible decision making
- Establish responsible financial income
- Connect with spiritual support group
- Meet all conditions of release
- Visit and personally thank all the people who have supported me while incarcerated
- Begin purchasing initial necessities

- Develop a workable budget and begin savings
- Attain driver's license and reliable transportation
- Provide personal Relational Assistance Service to at-risk youth agencies
- Pursue development of THE ANSWER TO CRIME AND YOUTH CRIME IN AMERICA
- Make amends to past victims where possible, and through continued service to society
- Move into my own place

Mid-term (First Three Years):

- Assess all short-term goals and accomplishments; modify if necessary
- Assess progress after one year—where I am, where I want to be in five years
- Determine what must be accomplished in order to realize these goals
- Continue service work and development of THE ANSWER
- Investigate public speaking opportunities, seminars, et cetera
- Publish my first two books and write another

Long-term (Beyond Three Years):

- Assess all previous goals and accomplishments; revise if necessary
- Buy a home and upgraded vehicle
- Develop sufficient income producing enterprise to provide for retirement
- Continue life's work of THE ANSWER TO CRIME AND YOUTH CRIME IN AMERICA

CONCLUSION

Upon release, Michael Curls intends to provide his knowledge, skills and services towards the continued development a state- and nationwide Relational Assistance Service that enables at-risk youth intervention to reach its greatest potential for success. Michael often speaks of how the Columbine High School massacre sparked a terrible trend of school shootings and

mass murders that could have and should have been prevented. He believes THE ANSWER's Relational Services will prevent many school shooting and other violent crimes.

Mr. Curls understands that granting his clemency weighs heavily upon the certainty that he is in fact rehabilitated and will not commit any more crimes upon release. Even though his first clemency was denied in 2009, and he was rendered ineligible to file another petition through the regular procedure, he has continued to conduct himself as a model citizen/resident.

Furthermore, Mr. Curls has invested thirty years developing vision that will contribute greatly to crime prevention and creating a safer society. His concept will help provide *THE ANSWER* that society has been searching for since the Columbine tragedy; something that will address the real issues that lead to school shootings and other crimes BEFORE they manifest into such heinous acts. He intends to continue that work upon release. The fact is, with Mr. Curls' 30 years of experience and expertise in the field of criminal rehabilitation and empathetic youth intervention, he has become an essential asset that society needs now more than ever before.

In view of the mitigating factors in Michael's case history, the magnitude of tragedy from which he has risen, with consideration of his many accomplishments, service and achievements, Michael Curls respectfully requests that the Executive Clemency Board consider his case to be one of exceptional merit according the Clemency Rule 17. The State of Florida could ask no more from any inmate in terms of rehabilitation, achievements, service, and contributions to society. Therefore, Michael prays for grace and mercy through granting his request for clemency and commutation of sentence to facilitate his release from the Florida Department of Corrections.

Respectfully Submitted,

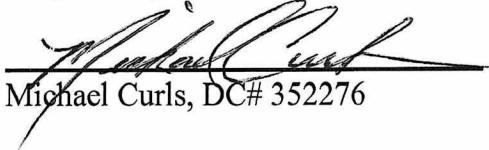

Michael Curls, DC# 352276

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- Exhibit B** Court Testimony of Dr. Thomas McClane, M.D.
- Exhibit C** Affidavit of Ron McAndrew, Prison and Jail Consultant
- Exhibit D** Affidavit of Dr. James McGovern, Psy.D., PLLD
- Exhibit E** THE ANSWER TO CRIME AND YOUTH CRIME IN AMERICA
Facilitator Training Initiative
Relational Assistance Service Initiative
Counselor Support Program
Progressive Programs Manual
- Exhibit F** Re-Entry Assistance Program Flow Chart; LifePath Group Project;
Accreditation Proposal and Support Letters
- Exhibit G** Articles Written by Michael Curls
- Exhibit H** Partial Record of Certifications and Achievements
- Exhibit I** Two-Year Parole Eligible Program Certificates
- Exhibit J** 2021 Through 2023 Exceptional Service Achievements
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- Exhibit L** Transitional Housing Acceptance Letters
- Appendix** Information, Judgments, and Sentencing Records