

Sample Letter Format and Content Suggestions

{Letterhead}

{Date}

In Reference To: {Inmate name and TDCJ number} – Parole Support Letter for His File
{Inmate Address}
{Inmate City, State and Zip}

Honorable Parole Board Members
Review and Release Processing
TDCJ Parole Division
P.O. Box 13401, Capitol Station
Austin, TX 78711

Dear Honorable Members of the Parole Board:

In the first section include:

- Your name
- Your age
- Your occupation (If you have been on the same job for a number of years, state the number of years you have been similarly employed)
- Your relationship with the participant (how you know him and for how long)
- Note how often you visit the unit, for how long you have been visiting the unit and how far is the drive for you to his unit. Also indicate how often you exchange letters and for how long have you been exchanging letters.
- Note that this letter is intended to be a parole support letter for placement in his file.

In the second section include a description of why you believe the participant, in your opinion, deserves the chance for parole. Describe your belief that the participant, despite his mistakes, is a good person by providing reasons and examples of why you feel this way. You also want to convey your belief that he will be a useful and a law abiding citizen given the chance. This can be accomplished using the following points:

- Describe the presence of feelings of responsibility and remorse.
- List accomplishments prior to his incarceration (ex: education, awards, substance abuse treatment, etc.)
- Include improvements the participant has made since being incarcerated (ex: education, substance abuse treatment programs, philanthropic work, attitude, behaviors, etc.)
- Think about what three character attributes best describe your loved one and how those traits have developed during his incarceration and how they will help him upon his release.

In the third section include information that demonstrates to the parole panel that the participant has a support system in place upon release and has fully anticipated his post-release life. Include information regarding the following along with examples of the people who would provide that support. Make sure to highlight the areas where you plan to provide assistance and

encouragement.

- Employment/potential employment. Employment is generally a great deterrent to future arrests. Highlight the skills and work experience your loved one has had that will aid in him finding employment. If employment arrangements have already been made, have the employer send a detailed description of the employment situation.
- Residence. Highlight how the residence of choice will aid in the rehabilitation and post-release success of your loved one. Include a picture, address and phone number, if available. You should indicate in your letter who will be providing living arrangements and the type of arrangements involved. Is this the prior address where the participant lived? Is the address in the same county where the crime occurred? If it is the same address as before, try to show why the prior crimes that occurred there won't happen again (greater family awareness, disassociation with people and activities with whom the client was previously involved, etc.). State whether rent will be involved, if there is a limited duration that the housing is available and who else will be living in the house.
- Transportation. Will he have personal transportation, or will he ride the bus? This is a smaller issue and should simply state if a car is available. If it is your car that is being made available then you should indicate whether it can be used for all purposes, or just for going to and from work only.
- Available treatment programs (as applicable). Addictions don't just go away. What is your loved one's plan for staying sober?
- Accountability plan/support system: Explain the different types of accountability that will be in your loved one's life. This can include the parole officer, family and PEP. The goal here is to show that he is being released into a loving environment with people who will also hold him accountable to the behaviors that he needs to adhere to upon release.
- Clothing: Explain the plan for finding clothing support upon release.
- Other information the writer feels would be helpful to the parole panel in making their decision.

Close the letter with a brief statement reiterating your belief in your loved one and provide contact information for any questions.

See the example below for an idea of what the letter could look like.