

SENATE OF VIRGINIA

MARY MARGARET WHIPPLE
31ST SENATORIAL DISTRICT
ALL OF THE CITY OF FALLS CHURCH, AND
PART OF ARLINGTON AND FAIRFAX COUNTIES
3556 NORTH VALLEY STREET
ARLINGTON, VIRGINIA 22207



COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS
RULES, CHAIR
AGRICULTURE, CONSERVATION AND
NATURAL RESOURCES
EDUCATION AND HEALTH
FINANCE
PRIVILEGES AND ELECTIONS

December 8, 2009

The Honorable Timothy M. Kaine
Governor of Virginia
P.O. Box 1475
Richmond, VA 23218

Re: Joseph M. Giarratano, Jr.'s Petition For Conditional Pardon

Dear Governor Kaine,

I request, encourage, and even urge you to grant clemency to Joseph M. Giarratano, Jr.

Recently I read the petition that was submitted to you in September. I was very troubled by the inconsistency of the "confessions" with the actual evidence at the crime scene. People accused of crimes deserve better from Virginia's criminal justice system. The "justice" part of that phrase means more than convictions; it means that law enforcement and the courts proceed thoughtfully, carefully, and fairly in the evaluation of evidence.

Then I was further dismayed to learn that evidence was destroyed even before the appeal was complete. Because of that, it is not possible for Mr. Giarratano to prove his innocence. It is very discouraging to think that these grievous errors are occurring in Virginia.

In any case, Mr. Giarratano, although spared from the death penalty, has been in prison for thirty years. By all accounts his life has been transformed and he has proved to be an articulate and effective advocate for other prisoners; he also initiated a remarkably successful inmate-led peace studies and alternative to violence program. I understand that a job is waiting for him along with other assistance should he be released from prison.

Please give this matter your serious and thoughtful consideration, as I know you will.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mary Margaret Whipple".

Mary Margaret Whipple
Senate 31st District

cc: Kevin Appel, Treasurers' Association of Virginia ✓