

PLEASE HELP

Brandon Hein needs your help now more than ever!

His last and final appeal was denied on April 12, 2010, exhausting his legal options. Governor Schwarzenegger has the power to fully commute Brandon's sentence and release him this year.

The Governor leaves office is January 2011 so time is short. Please help Brandon by writing to the Governor now!



Thanks to the Governor, Brandon does have a chance at parole, **but not for another 10 years** and a parole hearing is no guarantee of release. Brandon has been incarcerated for 15 years (as of May 23, 2010).

Please write to Governor Schwarzenegger to release Brandon Hein from Prison.

- You do not have to be a resident of CA to write. Anyone can make a difference.
- You do not have to know Brandon or his family personally to write.
- Write as often as you'd like - weekly, monthly, anytime. It will help. (One of Brandon's supporters has written to the Governor every day!)

We understand if you have never written to a politician, it can be hard to decide what to say. To help you get started we have included some examples and suggestions on the following pages.

1. Getting the details right
2. Example letter with alternate suggestions
3. Writing more than once
4. Fax/Email example

Thank you!

The Friends of Brandon Hein

freebh@brandonhein.com

Please ask
your friends
to write, too!

Getting the details right – Letters to the Governor

Most effective message:

Mail a letter that is either handwritten or typed (must be legible).

Other options

> Call the Governor's office (916-445-2841)

> Send a **Friends of Brandon Hein Supporter** fax (916-558-3160) or email (official site: <http://gov.ca.gov/interact>). See last page for example.

Mail it to the correct address:

The Honorable Governor Schwarzenegger
State Capitol Building
Legal Affairs / Re: Brandon Hein
Sacramento, CA 95814

→ **Please be sure to spell his name correctly. It's a tough one!**

Be respectful. The Governor has already commuted the “without parole” portion of Brandon’s sentence and for this we are deeply grateful.

Be sure of your facts. If you decide to include information about the case you can use the details below for reference or just check with us before you send the letter (email us at freebh@brandonhein.com).

- **Brandon was 18 years old when he was arrested on May 23, 1995.** He and his friends were involved in a spontaneous, backyard brawl over marijuana on May 22nd that resulted in the death of another teenager, Jimmy Farris.
- **Even though Brandon did not have a weapon and did not kill anyone, he was sentenced to Life in Prison Without the Possibility of Parole.** He has been incarcerated in LA County Jail and CA State Prison ever since (15 years as of May 23, 2010).
- **Brandon’s final appeal** was filed with the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit in 2008. Oral arguments were heard on Oct. 7, 2009.
- **On April 12, 2010, his appeal was denied.** This has exhausted Brandon’s legal options.
- **On March 17, 2009, Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger granted a partial commutation which removed the “without parole” portion of Brandon’s sentence.** As a result, Brandon will be eligible for parole in approximately 10 years. This is not a guarantee of release, just a chance to go before the Parole Board. If denied, he may not be allowed to appear before the Board for another 3 to 15 years (at the Board’s discretion).
- **Since being incarcerated Brandon has worked hard to make good use of his time.** He received his GED, completed correspondence courses from Indiana University (paid for by his family), is a self taught artist and writer, has had various jobs in prison, participated in the Reaching Out Convicts to Kids (R.O.C.K.) program, earned certificates for prison sponsored self-improvement programs, helped students with their reports about his case and what life is like in prison, and has always advised young people to make better choices than he did as a teenager.

Letter Example

Feel free to use your own words and style.

Dear Governor Schwarzenegger,

<Tell the Governor why you are writing this letter?>

First, I am writing to thank you for commuting the “without parole” portion of Brandon Hein’s sentence, making him eligible for parole in about 10 years.

Second, I am writing to ask you to please release Brandon from Prison before you leave office.

<Tell him about yourself. Example below>

I am a **resident of the State of California** and for many years I have worked as a **teacher**. I am also a mother who cares about Brandon’s future.

<How do you know about this case? Example below>

Brandon’s parents spoke to my church’s youth group. I started writing to Brandon and was so impressed with his kindness and decency.

<Say why you feel that Brandon should be released?>

I feel that Brandon should be freed from prison **because I feel his sentence is unjust and he has already served 15 years.**

<Summary>

You have announced that you will be leaving office in January 2011 and I ask you to please not leave without releasing Brandon Hein from prison. He will be a productive citizen on the outside, he has a strong family support network and he deserves another chance.

Sincerely,

First and Last Name

Address

Phone

As you can see by the alternate examples below, each supporter’s story is different.

You don’t have to be a CA resident to help!

...a citizen of the U.S.
...from Australia
...from Panama
...from anywhere!

Make it real. Tell him who you are.

...a store clerk
...a mechanic
...a police officer
...a manager
...a friend
...a kid
...a paralegal
...a retired _____
...a teenager
...anyone!

Make it personal. Tell how you first learned of Brandon Hein.

...saw the documentary
...read an article (print or online)
...know Brandon personally
...have visited him in prison
...he belongs to our church
...friends with his family
...someone I respect just told me about it

Make it even more personal, if you can, with details of your experiences with Brandon.

...I have fond memories of ____
...he gave wise advice to my kids
...he’s a loving nephew/cousin/grandson/friend
...he helped me with my school report

Add the reason(s) you personally feel he should be released.

...he didn’t kill anyone
...it is a waste of tax dollars
...he will be a responsible member of society
...he has made good use of his time
>self-taught artist and writer
>college correspondence courses
>certificate programs
>helped students with reports
>advised kids on decision making

Writing more than once – what could you say?

The examples below have been adapted from comments we receive every day from Brandon's supporters, family and friends.

I have written to you before regarding releasing Brandon Hein from prison. I thought of Brandon today and how unjust his sentence is. Please find it in your heart to fully commute his sentence.

Brandon Hein's dad showed me some of his drawings today. Brandon's family loves him so much and they are proud of how hard he has worked to bring some good out of his years behind bars. He was only 18 when he was arrested and he is 33 years old now. Please don't leave office without sending him home.

I have written to you before, asking that you release Brandon Hein from prison before you leave office. Every time I read an article about crime and punishment in the news I think of him. It would mean so much to all of us if you would give him another chance at freedom.

I'm writing to you about Brandon Hein again today. I thought I would send you a photo of Brandon taken when I visited him last year. He has an amazing presence and is courageous in spite of the years that have passed. Please set him free before you leave office.

I have written to you before about Brandon Hein. With Brandon's current sentence of 29-years-to-life, he won't be eligible for parole for about 10 years and then there is no guarantee that parole will be granted. Please release Brandon before you leave office in January.

I saw flowers in bloom this morning and thought about how sad it is that Brandon Hein is not able to see them too. So many of the things that we take for granted are denied to him. I believe he has been punished enough. Please Governor, release him from prison before you leave office.

I am writing to you again about Brandon Hein. As a young person, I made bad choices myself. "There but for the grace of God, go I." I was fortunate enough to be able to go on to become a productive citizen and loving family member. It would be terrible if Brandon never got that chance. I know he will succeed as a free man. Please release him before you leave office.

My son keeps asking when Brandon Hein will be allowed to go home to his family. I don't know what to tell him. Please give Brandon another chance and set him free.

I told a friend about Brandon Hein today and it was hard for them to believe that his sentence could be so harsh even after your intervention. Please do not leave him behind in a prison cell when you leave office.

Fax/Email example

Use or adapt the letter below by copying it into a word document and faxing it with a cover sheet. Or copy it into your email message. **Be sure to sign it with your full contact information (name, address and phone number) before sending. Send Fax to** (916-558-3160) or **email** (official site: <http://gov.ca.gov/interact>)

The Friends of Brandon Hein

www.brandonhein.com

The Honorable Governor Schwarzenegger
State Capitol Building
Legal Affairs / Re: Brandon Hein
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Governor,

I am a responsible, tax paying citizen who feels strongly that Brandon Hein, an inmate at Centinela State Prison, should be released. I understand that Brandon is eligible for parole in 10 years but I respectfully ask that you fully commute the remainder of his sentence of 29-years-to-life and release him before you leave office in January 2011.

I believe you should do this for the sake of:

Justice: Our legal system is founded on the notion of fair trial and punishment. The courts have failed to mitigate the inappropriate sentence that resulted from this misapplication of the Felony Murder Rule and to address the severe prosecutorial misconduct that tainted Brandon's right to due process, even while stating on record that it occurred. Brandon has exhausted his legal options. This is a shameful injustice.

Fiscal Responsibility: Incarcerating Brandon in a maximum security prison for an additional 10 years, or more if he is not granted parole at his first hearing, will cost taxpayers approximately \$36,000 per year, with nothing to be gained as a result. This is in addition to the estimated \$400,000 to \$500,000 already paid for 15 years served as of May 23, 2010. Brandon has the skills, drive and strong support network needed to make it on the outside. He is worthy of another chance to contribute to society.

Humanity:

Brandon was a teenager who made poor choices and who was guilty of underage drinking and throwing punches in a spontaneous backyard brawl. He has already been incarcerated for 15 years serving as much, and in many cases more, time than inmates found guilty of intentionally and directly causing the death of another. This is a wrong that must be righted.

Again, I respectfully ask that you please release Brandon from prison before you leave office in January.

Sincerely,

