

Northwestern
PRITZKER SCHOOL OF LAW
Bluhm Legal Clinic

Center on Wrongful Convictions

October 24, 2019

Governor Tony Evers
115 East
State Capitol
Madison, WI 53702

Dear Governor Evers:

We write this letter to express our sincere hope that you will extend executive clemency, in the form of either a pardon or a commutation, to Brendan Dassey.

Each person who signed this letter brings a different perspective. Some of us are lawyers who practice variously in the state and federal courts, including in trial courts, appellate courts, and the United States Supreme Court. Some of us are psychologists, including leading experts in the psychology of interrogations and confessions. Some of us are experts on juvenile justice; some of us are disability experts. Some of us are academics who study miscarriages of justice in Wisconsin and abroad. Some of us are exonerees who have ourselves been convicted of crimes we did not commit and who were later cleared by DNA evidence. Still others simply wish to lend our names and voices in support of Brendan.

Each of us feels called upon by our conscience to sign this letter. Many of us believe Brendan Dassey to be wrongly convicted and his statements, which constitute the primary evidence against him, to be unreliable. Many of us believe that the process that led to the conviction of this sixteen-year-old special education student was indefensibly flawed, characterized by egregious defense attorney misconduct. And many of us believe that Brendan's sentence – life in prison, with no chance of parole until 2048 – is wildly inappropriate. All of us agree that, after serving more than thirteen years in prison and accumulating an exemplary prison record, it is time to bring Brendan Dassey home.

We call upon you, Governor Evers, to use your sovereign power of executive clemency, whether in the form of a pardon or a commutation, to end the incarceration of Brendan Dassey. You are an educator; you are a reformer; and you are a believer, like us, in justice, mercy, and redemption. After you review this case, we believe your conscience will compel the conclusion that Brendan is worthy of the exercise of your clemency power. We respectfully urge you to pardon Brendan Dassey or commute his sentence.

Sincerely,

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* Signatories designated with an asterisk expressed a wish to sign in their individual capacities; their institutions are included for identification purposes only.