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Gavin Newsom, Governor  
1303 10<sup>th</sup> Street, Ste. 1173  
Sacramento, CA 95814

September 23, 2019

Attn: Legal Affairs

FAX: (916) 558-3160

Re: Parole Hearing – May 30, 2019

San Quentin Prison

Subject: Inmate Raul Higgins

CDC # : P-29949

PANEL: Pete Labahn

Dear Governor,

I am writing to request that you do not sign the document allowing inmate Raul Higgins to re-enter society. This man violently murdered a mother of five children. This was more than manslaughter. Reviewing the incident, there was intent. He knew his victim's children would come home to find their mother murdered on the kitchen floor. The severity of his actions and the horrific consequences to five young children bereft of their mother demonstrate a criminality that demands the justice of lifelong incarceration. If only because the grief and loss these children know is lifelong.

Higgins has long history of not only being abusive and violent toward women, but he has engaged in multiple concurrent relationships. He has been fired from every job he held for being drunk and irresponsible. Getting sober and finding religion in prison does not demonstrate that Raul Higgins "might" be rehabilitated.

This man has demonstrated multiple times that he is a danger to society. Further, to allow him parole will devastate the five children of the Bolger family, whose mother he brutally murdered. Knowing he is incarcerated gives them at least some peace. Letting him out into society will cause unending anxiety and further grief to a family who has bravely survived, held together and become successful members of society after multiple years of grieving.

This family is truly outstanding and doesn't deserve the devastating blow of constant worry and anxiety if the murderer of their mother is allowed back into society. They will never feel peace.

I am a California licensed Marriage Family Therapist. I have been a therapist for and with the five Bolger children, now adults, Melissa, Timothy, Joseph, Stephan and Megan, individually and together.

I began seeing the Bolger family for therapy in 2005 when Tim Bolger and his wife Robin, then in their late 20s, were hoping to gain custody of their younger siblings, Stephen and Megan, minor children at that time, who had been placed in foster care due to their father's abusive behavior and alcoholism.

These five siblings have held together amazingly well, mutually supporting each other despite the violent tragedy of losing their mother in a brutal and senseless murder.

Around 1996 their parents divorced. Melissa and Tim, in their late teens were living with their dad in the San Diego area. Their mother, Carolyn Marie Bolger maintained the family home in Redding with the three younger children, Joseph, Stephen and Megan. Their mother befriended a man, Raul Higgins, who had limited resources, and allowed him to sleep on the couch in their home. The children, especially Joseph objected so she told Raul to leave. Three days later, on November 20, 1998, Higgins returned after the children left for school and strangled Carolyn in the kitchen. Fifteen-year-old Joseph returned from school and found his mother's body. Stephan and Megan were less than ten years old.

The children were split up and struggled dealing with their loss and growing up without each other. When Tim married Robin they decided to get their family back together. It was a protracted long distance battle as their father had taken Stephen and Megan to Hawaii. Undeterred, Tim found a lawyer and after two years, spending funds they could ill afford, he brought his teenage brother and sister to live in Santa Barbara with his wife Robin and their new baby. Joseph by then was also in Santa Barbara. Melissa was struggling to survive in San Francisco. They saw each other on all holidays, especially on the anniversaries of their mother's death and on her birthday.

When parole hearings were scheduled, we would get together as they wrote their letters and gathered courage to travel together to the prison where Higgins was incarcerated. Each time was a profound trauma which these five young people survived as they clung to each other for support.

There may be some individuals who can be rehabilitated, however not Raul Higgins. Society demands that this proven murderer remain incarcerated. Only then will justice be served for this truly incredible family.

Governor Newsom, I felt you needed to know some of the background of this tragedy. Please give this family some surcease from their lifelong sorrow. There is no assurance that Higgins, a proven violent criminal can be trusted back into society.

Respectfully,

Toni Wellen  
MFCC 24702