

Alicia L.M. Tremper  
34 Roberts Street  
Torrington, CT 06790  
860-489-3611  
[rtremper@optonline.net](mailto:rtremper@optonline.net)

September 28, 2007

Governor M. Jodi Rell  
Executive Office of the Governor  
State Capitol  
210 Capitol Avenue  
Hartford, CT 06106

RE: Board of Pardons & Parole

Dear Ms. Rell:

First, I would like to applaud your recent efforts to reduce public risk from violent offenders. Thank you very much for responding to what feels to me like an endless problem.

Next, I would like to point out a flaw that may hamper your efforts. In order to do so, I'll have to tell you a rather sad story. I apologize in advance for its gravity, but in order to truly understand the concerns I have, it is important to take this route.

On May 9, 1979 I was attending NCCC, and since it was a very hot day and finals were looming large I was studying on the porch of the apartment where my father and I were living. The phone rang, and being a typical 19-year-old I was there in a flash. It was my dad and he sounded horrible. I could barely understand what he was saying, first because he was so upset, then because of my own shock. He was telling me that something had happened to my mother and the police were at our house in Bantam. My parents were estranged, and in the process of selling their house, where my mom was living. As it turns out, my mother had been murdered. Not just murdered; according to the autopsy there was an attempted rape, which she reportedly fought off leaving her with multiple blunt force injuries, numerous stab wounds, chop wounds to the head and neck, broken cheekbone, broken ribs, and severed vertebrae. The entire community was in shock—nothing like that happens around here.

The CT State Police along with the Major Crime Squad quickly and efficiently gathered evidence, pieced together my mothers' last days and hours leading up to her death, questioned and arrested their suspect. On July 6, 1979 they arrested William H. Stepney of Morris & charged him with murder, setting a \$100,000. cash bond. That was reduced to \$500. because his lawyers (James Wade of Hartford & Louis Erteschik of Litchfield) convinced the judge at the time that their client was harmless. (Despite their defense in the trial focusing on their client's inability to have been with my mother long enough to kill her because he was hauling scrap metal—a physically demanding job for even the most hearty and hale)

On 8/16/1979 a Grand Jury with a vote of 16-2 indicted Stepney after 20 minutes of deliberation. On 11/11/1980, he was convicted of murder. The sentencing came in January of 1981. Judge George Stoughton ruled that 22 years to life were to be served, with no parole until 1994, given the violence of the crime. There was a collective sigh of relief not just from my family but the community as a whole. States Attorney Dennis Santore and Assistant D.A. Anne Dranginis had done their jobs. Unfortunately, because of appeals to the State and US Supreme courts he was not imprisoned until May of 1984. Five years after having committed this wretched crime, the convicted criminal finally took up residence in Somers.

But not to worry—this is a convicted murderer—one who committed an especially heinous crime, and we all know that once someone is sentenced, all is done & over. The fat lady had sung. Just to be on the safe side, I gave my married name and contact information to the Somers Prison, State District Attorney's office, Parole & Pardons Board, & Troop L in Litchfield, should there be any parole attempts. Atty. Wade attempted to get medical paroles and even tried for a pardon within the first five years of Stepney's imprisonment. All of which were thwarted by the State District Attorney's office, and considered to be pathetic attempts by lawyers desperate for publicity.

November 29, 1990, another terrible phone call. This time it was my mother's sister, telling me that Stepney was being released—that she'd read it in the paper. Okay, I'm thinking she must have gone off the deep end, because this simply couldn't be happening. There isn't even eligibility for Parole until 1994, and I'm pretty sure she said something about Pardons. (Herein lies my concern with your Parole suspension) I actually had to look up the word I was in such a state of disbelief—I was certain this wasn't really happening.

I started making phone calls. Ultimately I reached Burton Yaffie, from the Parole & Pardons Board. He informed me that this was a done deal; the decision had been made before the State's Attorney had even entered the room for the review based on the fact that this particular inmate was costing the Department of Corrections too much money due to his various maladies. He went on to say that there is nothing that can be done about this because the Board answers to no one, and no one has the jurisdiction to question their decisions. He then asked me why I can't just let this man go home and enjoy the holidays with his family. *Go home and enjoy the holidays with his family?!?* I pointed out to Mr. Yaffie that my mother was not afforded the luxury of being able to spend holidays with her family. His response was that I needed to accept this ruling and he hung up.

Since that autumn day in 1990 I have crossed paths with Mr. Stepney and members of his family on numerous occasions; in the grocery store, at the movies, even one Mother's Day at a Daffodil farm in Northfield. I have had to make adjustments in my professional positions within the healthcare field. Mr. Stepney was seeking treatment from a physician I was working for, and I had to explain to that physician why I was having an anxiety attack when the new patient walked through the door. Being a good, kind man the doctor offered to not take on this new patient, but I chose to not disrupt his practice and left my job. A few years later I was working at a hospital when I was paged to the Emergency Room, and who did I come face-to-face with? My mother's murderer. After I explained to my co-workers (yet again) why I simply could not assist with this

particular patient I went back to work, but in the end had to leave that position also due to extreme anxiety, depression and what was ultimately diagnosed as post traumatic stress disorder. These are just a few of the chance encounters I've had over the years. Furthermore I believe that this murderer is still alive at 91 years of age. I wonder how many happy holidays he and Mr. Yaffie have enjoyed at my expense.

At this point I am not nearly as concerned for the safety of myself and the community, as I am outraged at the affront to my mother, my family, the police who gathered evidence and supplied important data, the Office of State's Attorney who illustrated the events of May 9, 1979 to the jury, and the jurors involved. Why did these people waste their time doing their jobs, having to witness this atrocity, and try to make some sense of it only to have the almighty Pardons Board crush their efforts and my heart?

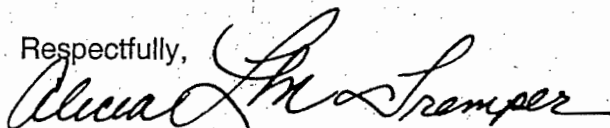
You see, it's not just that a convicted prisoner may or may not be of future danger to the community when released; it comes back to why they were there in the first place. The convicted criminals clearly care not what pain they inflict or to whom, and sadly neither does the Pardons Board. Our system is failing us Ms Rell. I have never been big on math, but I know the follow equation just doesn't work:

Five years of appeals, and legal balderdash before serving any time  
Six years served on a 22-years-to-life sentence  
1990-present day = 17 years of absolute & complete freedom—another kicker of Pardons; there is no follow up on the released prisoner any more than there is on the Board itself. Now hold those facts in one hand, and my mother's life in the other—does it feel balanced to you? I'm not feeling like Lady Justice is doing very well.

Maybe you are already aware of this escape route available to Connecticut convicts. The fact remains, it needs to be changed. With the recent occurrence in Cheshire, it is begging to be changed.

Please know that I will support your ban on early release of inappropriate prisoners in any way I can. If you need testimony, letters of support, or any other backing please let me know. I don't want anyone else to live through what my family and I have, or what the folks in Cheshire are enduring after the Petit slayings. You are welcome to contact me at any time, in any manner as (I am sure you noticed) I am rather passionate about these issues. You will also find supporting documentation in reference to the bill on "Testimony of Crime Victims at Sessions of the Board of Pardons".

Respectfully,



Alicia L.M. Tremper

CC: Survivors of Homicide, Honorable Anne C. Dranginis, William Petit, MD,  
Burton Yaffie, James Wade, Louis Erteschik, Senator Joseph Lieberman  
Senator Christopher Dodd, State Senator Andrew Roraback



STATE OF CONNECTICUT  
SENATE  
STATE CAPITOL  
HARTFORD 06106

SENATOR M. ADELA EADS  
SENATE REPUBLICAN LEADER  
THIRTIETH DISTRICT

160 MACEDONIA ROAD  
KENT, CONNECTICUT 06757  
TELEPHONE  
HARTFORD : 240-8800  
HOME : 927-3553  
TOLL FREE : 1-800-842-1421

February 28, 1991

Ms. Alicia Tremper  
34 Roberts Street  
Torrington, CT 06790

Dear Ms. Tremper:

I just wanted to take a moment to advise you that the bill I introduced concerning crime victims has been incorporated with HB 5091, "An Act Concerning The Testimony Of Crime Victims At Sessions Of The Board of Pardons."

Enclosed you will find a copy of the bill, and as you can see, the context is exactly the same as the bill we proposed. A public hearing has been held, with passage very likely since the Chairman of the Judicial Committee, Representative Tulisano, is a co-sponsor.

Please be assured that I shall continue to monitor the progress of the bill and work towards its passage.

Please feel free to contact my office should you require further information or assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Adela Eads", followed by a horizontal line.

M. Adela Eads  
Senate Republican Leader

MAE/jem

Committee Bill No. 5091 Page PPPL  
Referred to Committee on JUDICIARY

LCO No. 2250

Introduced by (JUD)

General Assembly  
January Session, A.D., 1991

AN ACT CONCERNING THE TESTIMONY OF CRIME VICTIMS AT SESSIONS OF  
THE BOARD OF PARDONS.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in  
General Assembly convened:

(NEW) (a) For the purposes of this section, "victim" includes  
the legal representative of the victim or a member of a deceased  
victim's immediate family.

(b) At a session held by the board of pardons to consider  
whether to grant a commutation of punishment or release,  
conditioned or absolute, a commutation from the penalty of death  
or a pardon, conditioned or absolute, to any person convicted of  
any offense against the state, the board shall permit any victim  
of the crime for which the person was convicted to appear before  
the board for the purpose of making a statement for the record  
concerning whether the convicted person should be granted such  
commutation, release or pardon. In lieu of such appearance, the  
victim may submit a written statement to the board and the board  
shall make such statement a part of the record at the session.

(c) The board of pardons shall notify any victim authorized  
to appear at a session pursuant to this section of the date, time  
and place of the session if such victim has requested the board  
to so notify him and has provided a current address for the  
mailing of such notice.

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE: To insure that the victim of a crime is  
given the opportunity to be heard before a pardon, commutation of  
punishment or release is granted to the offender by the board of  
pardons.

[Proposed deletions are enclosed in brackets. Proposed  
additions are all capitalized or underlined where appropriate,  
except that when the entire text of a bill or resolution or a  
section thereof is new, it is not capitalized or underlined.]

Co-Sponsors: REP. TULISANO, 29th DIST.; SEN. EADS, 30th DIST.  
REP. SAMOWITZ, 129th DIST.; REP. CHASE, 120th DIST.  
REP. RAIA, 23rd DIST.; REP. LEBEAU, 11th DIST.  
REP. FERRARI, 62nd DIST.; REP. MOYNIHAN, 10th DIST.  
REP. IRELAND, 111th DIST.; REP. DEL BIANCO, 71st DIST.  
REP. AVITABILE, 65th DIST.; REP. NYSTROM, 46th DIST.  
REP. SMITH, 119th DIST.; REP. AMANN, 118th DIST.  
REP. FRITZ, 90th DIST.; REP. STOLBERG, 93rd DIST.  
SEN. SULLIVAN, 5th DIST.



STATE OF CONNECTICUT  
SENATE  
STATE CAPITOL  
HARTFORD 06106

SENATOR M. ADELA EADS  
SENATE REPUBLICAN LEADER  
PRO TEMPORE  
THIRTIETH DISTRICT  
  
160 MACEDONIA ROAD  
KENT, CONNECTICUT 06757  
TELEPHONE  
HARTFORD: 240-8800  
HOME: 927-3553  
TOLL FREE: 1-800-842-1421

RANKING MEMBER  
EDUCATION COMMITTEE  
MEMBER  
BANKS COMMITTEE  
PROGRAM REVIEW & INVESTIGATIONS

December 18, 1990

Ms. Alcia Tremper  
34 Roberts Street  
Torrington, CT 06790

Dear Ms. Tremper:

Enclosed you will find a copy of proposed legislation which would insure that the victim of a crime is given the opportunity to be heard before a pardon is granted to an offender.

I would strongly suggest that you contact the co-chairmen of the Judiciary Committee; Senator Anthony Avallone, LOB, Suite 2500, Hartford, CT 06106 and Representative Richard Tulisano, LOB, Suite 2500, Hartford, CT 06106, as this legislation will be referred to the Judiciary Committee.

It is my hope that this legislation will be passed as I do believe many share your sentiments concerning this issue. Please feel free to contact my office while the matter is pending, should the need arise.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "M. Adela Eads".

M. Adela Eads  
Senate Republican Leader-Elect

STATE OF CONNECTICUT

Proposed Bill No.

Page 1

Referred to Committee on

LCO No. 237

Introduced by SEN. EADS, 30th DIST.

General Assembly

January Session, A.D., 1991

AN ACT AUTHORIZING CRIME VICTIMS TO TESTIFY AT HEARINGS OF THE  
BOARD OF PARDONS.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in  
General Assembly convened:

That chapter 321 of the general statutes be amended by  
requiring the board of pardons to hold a hearing prior to  
granting a pardon, commutation of punishment or release of any  
person convicted of an offense in this state, to notify any  
victim or a family member of the victim of the date, time and  
place of the hearing if such victim or family member has  
requested the notice and provided a current address for the  
mailing of such notice, and to allow such victim or family member  
to appear at such hearing and address the board.

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE: To insure that the victim of a crime is  
given the opportunity to be heard before a pardon, commutation  
of punishment or release is granted to the offender by the board



29 October, 1990

Dear Governor O'Neill,

I am writing to you in reference to the recent release of William Stepney, from Somers prison, as a result of the Pardons Board commuting his sentence. There are two basic reasons why I am writing to you in regards to this action taken by the board. First, Barbara McKitis was my mother, and she was savagely murdered by this person. I was under the naive impression that since the court saw fit to imprison Mr. Stepney--for a term of twenty-two years to life, that he would not be back in society for some time. You see, I was there when he was sentenced, and I heard no mention of "This is your sentence; if you can handle it--otherwise we will let you go after serving only six years". My mother was not, and is not deserving of this kind of contemptuous affront, and neither is her family.

Secondly, I am appaled at the disrespectful conduct of the Pardons Board, and since your office appointed the members, I would expect you to be accountable for problems which arise when they act outside of the scope of their authority. The Secretary of the Board told me that even if any of my family had been present at the Board's meeting (we were not notified of its existence) that it would have done no good, since they had already made a decision on the basis that this prisoner was too costly for the Corrections Department to support, and that he would like to spend the remainder of his life at home with his family. Does this sound like appropriate action on the part of the Board to you? They are supposed to consider the nature of the offense--a point which they clearly ignored. They are supposed to listen to the State's Attorney when he explains: that this sort of release is a mockery of the Justice System. They are also supposed to consider other pertinent information--that being the lack of time served, the outrage of the family and community, and that ever present fact that this prisoner is a vicious murderer. This Board is clearly acting as an early release mechanism, and must be stopped.

The action taken by the Pardons Board is simply unacceptable, as it will be in any case where a murder has taken place.

Please use your executive power to overturn this decision!!

Yours Truly Heartbroken, and Enraged  
*Alicia L. M. Tremper*  
Alicia L. M. Tremper



02 January 1991

Dear Governor-Elect Weiker,

I am writing to you in reference to a letter which I had sent to your predecessor, Governor O'Neill. (There is a copy of his letter enclosed.) The subject of both your letter, and his is the recent (November 20th) release of William Stepney from Somers prison. I am truly amazed that the Governor, and his office have chosen to ignore this issue, in spite of the fact that when I phoned O'Neill's office, attorney Rifkin agreed with me that the Board of Pardons was operating outside of the scope of their authority; with total disregard for the victim, her family, the community, and making a mockery of the judicial system.

While I am fully aware of the fact that you were not in office when this travesty took place, I am turning to you for help, knowing full well that you are the only one who can help. This is not a simple commutation of a 25 years to life sentence; there are a number of complex issues which are in need of immediate attention.

First, and most importantly, this man should never have been released from prison, and should be returned there without any further delay. He brutally beat, stabbed, and ultimately murdered my mother in May of 1979. Through the appeals process he was able to avoid serving any time for five years, and then only served six years of the sentence which was considered lenient at the time.

Next is the issue of the Pardons Board. This Board was set up some time ago, to relieve the Governor's work load, and provide a more "jury-like" body for the execution of pardons rather than one person having and being burdened with, all that power. The problem now is that the Board has ultimate power, and apparently has to answer to no one. (According to Mr. Yaffe's boasting) This is definatly wrong, and in need of correction as is the lack of guidelines that the Pardons Board is required to follow; there are none! There are no regulations as to who can go before the Board--Stepney wasn't even eligible for parole. This means that someone imprisoned for stealing food to feed his/her family and a brutal murderer are both eligible to go before the Board, and most likely both walk away from their sentence. There is also no provision for security measures, rehabilitation, or any other follow-up after a prisoner has been released by the Pardons Board.

The lack of follow-up is directly related to who should or should not be allowed a chance to be heard by the Board. A prisoner who has savagely murdered an innocent woman is certainly not high on the priority list of those who should be allowed the privilege of re-entering society. In addition to the whimsical overturn of this particular prisoner's sentence, I feel that you should realize that it was done secretly. A year or so ago, Mr. Stepney's slick lawyers tried this same action; stating the prisoner's poor health, and age as important factors for the State to consider, when reviewing not only this case, but also their budget. I was immediately in contact with the Pardons Board, the Parole Board, and the records department within the prison itself, leaving word with each that I wanted to be notified if this action should occur again. I also spoke to the State's Attorney's office, who assured me that the Pardons Board would never release Stepney. None of the above mentioned persons or offices gave an indication that they were ignoring me, or that they had no intention of notifying me. It was only after Mr. Yaffe laughed at me for assuming that I had a right to be contacted and told me that even if I had been there, the Board wouldn't have listened to me, that I realized how this group of people works. Not only have I learned that they have no obligation to contact victims, and their families, but in this case had no intention to even listen to the State's Attorney, because the decision had already been made--for "budgetary reasons"--according to Mr. Yaffe. I have received some support on the issue of notification from Senator Eads, and Representative Toulisano. This simply not enough. Someone has to stop the use of the Pardons Board as an early release mechanism.

The action taken by the Pardons Board is simply unacceptable, not only by myself, and members of my family, but also the community, and citizens as a whole. I implore you to use your executive power to overturn this outrageous decision, and return this vicious murderer to prison where he belongs.

Yours Truly

*Alicia L. M. Tremper*  
Alicia L. M. Tremper

cc: Senator Eads, Maureen Donald-Litchfield  
Representative Toulisano, Enquirer  
Senator Avallone, & Diane Blick

489-3611

## A CONNECTICUT PARTY

231 Farmington Avenue

Farmington, CT 06032

(203) 676-9090

May 6, 1991

Mrs. Alicia M. Tremper  
34 Roberts Street  
Torrington, CT 06790

Dear Alicia:

I acknowledge receipt of your package of documents which was mailed to me regarding the parole of William Stepney. Since I knew your sister, Sue and your brother, Mike, this case was of personal interest to me. Recent spine surgery has prevented me from responding to you sooner.

Although the current legislation which is before the House and Senate will not help your immediate case, it will prevent such an injustice from happening again in the future. You can also rest assured that the Parole Board recently appointed by Governor Weicker will act more responsibly and be more accountable.

My thoughts and prayers continue to be with you and your family. Please have some peace of mind in knowing that it is through your efforts that this Bill has been introduced thereby preventing the families of other victims from experiencing the pain you have had to endure. Best regards.

Sincerely,



Diane S. Blick  
State Chairman



A CONNECTICUT PARTY

202 Oak St.  
Winsted, Ct. 06098  
December 21, 1990

Mr. Thomas D'Amore  
Weicker Transition Office  
Room 110  
State Capitol  
Hartford, Ct. 06115

Dear Mr. D'Amore:

I am writing with two specific requests of you and Governor-elect Weicker. First, I am looking for direction on how to have a pardon revoked.

On Nov. 19, 1990 the Board of Pardons pardoned William Stepney, Jr. and commuted his sentence to time served. Mr. Stepney was in Somers Prison for second degree murder and, due to his exhausting a lengthy appeal process had served only 6 years of his 22 years to life sentence. He was released on Nov. 20, 1990.

When I asked Burton Yaffe of the Board to explain the pardon, he said "it was a budgetary thing". Mr. Stepney is in poor health and has been hospitalized several times. Mr. Yaffe then told me that there is no appeal process to reverse a pardon and that the Board answers to no one, it is an absolute authority. He suggested that I sue the State if I wanted to try and reverse the Board's decision. Howard Rifkin of the Governor's office also told me that the Board's authority is absolute and, while he felt that they had exceeded their scope and authority, the only recourse he could suggest would be a suit.

I was first involved in this situation because I am one of Barbara McKitis' children. My mother was the victim of Stepney's savage murder. As other members of my family and I have pursued the matter, we have become convinced that, even if we weren't so personally involved, we would find the situation a gross and appalling misuse of authority.

The Board is given only brief mention in the General Statutes (Chapter 321) yet has exercised authority to release a prisoner who would not even be eligible for parole until 1994. They have no requirements to notify interested parties of hearings, as does the Parole Board. Frank Maco, our State's Attorney, told us that he felt that the Board did not even listen to his remarks at the hearing, that it was a "done deal".

I feel that it is very important to find a way to reverse the Board's decision in this matter. To release a prisoner convicted of a savage crime because his health care is too costly makes a mockery of the legal system. I have spoken several times with Frank Maco who has described some of the anger and debilitating sense of frustration he, his staff and other prosecutors feel about this release. Many of us are asking why go through the expense and effort to investigate and prosecute, only to have a decision revoked? I don't know if political favors are at work here or extreme pressure due to budgetary concerns but I feel that this release is totally inappropriate.

I have also spoken to Representative Joel Gordes, who promised to look into the situation and brief his successor, Richard Ferrari, on his findings. Senator Reginald Smith advised me to call Atty. Laura Cubanski who reviewed my information and Melissa Farley of Senators Smith's and Eads' office responded with a letter to the Board requesting a reversal of the pardon. Ms. Farley was very careful to advise me that she held no hope for the reversal actually happening because there was no precedent. My question here is, how can there be a precedent when the Board is behaving in an unprecedented manner?

The second request I am making is for support of legislation which would provide the Board of Pardons with specific guidelines under which they may grant pardons and clear procedural requirements, such as notification of hearings to interested parties. After seeing a tape of Lew Brown (of WVIT) interviewing my sister, Alicia Tremper, Representative Tulisano drafted legislation to require the Board to give victims or their survivors notification of hearings so that they may also be heard. I feel that this only addresses part of the problem and I am requesting him to include operational guidelines and requirements which would prohibit the release of prisoners who do not even meet parole requirements. I would very much appreciate an opportunity to speak with you and Governor-elect Weicker on these matters.

As my family and I have spoken with various officials and attorneys we have found that most of them were unaware of the lack of regulation governing the Board and they were astounded by it's actions. Clearly, a terrible mistake has been made which must be corrected and steps should be taken to insure that no further inappropriate actions like this happen again.

We have the right to trust in the judicial system and expect that it's judgements will be adhered to. This trust and these expectations are part of the base of our society. One of the comforts which helped ease our grieving was the knowledge that through a fair and thorough process the murderer would be duly prosecuted and punished. Though mere imprisonment was the worst that could happen to Stepney, we found comfort in relying on our society's due process. Each appeal denial brought more comfort in knowing that the system was working as it should. Now, to have him pardoned and released betrays not only our trust in the system but that of any other citizen who also had every right to believe that our society will not condone crime and will adequately punish those who commit offenses.

Very truly yours,

Suzanne McKitis-Perillo

202 Oak St.  
Winsted, Ct. 06098-1232  
Jan. 2, 1991

Rep. Richard Tulisano  
State Capitol  
Hartford, Conn. 06106

Dear Rep. Tulisano:

At your request from several weeks ago, I am writing to present my ideas for legislation regarding the Board of Pardons.

As I am sure that you receive many calls proposing legislation let me briefly refresh your memory as to what we spoke of on the phone.

I called requesting assistance to overturn a Board of Pardons decision. The Board had, on Nov. 19, 1990, pardoned William Stepney and commuted his sentence of 22 years-to-life to time served. Stepney was in Somers Prison after having been found guilty of second degree murder and had exhausted every avenue of appeal. He served only 6 years of his sentence and had been in the hospital several times. My mother was the victim of his especially savage attack.

Lew Brown of WVIT News interviewed my sister, Alicia Tremper, and showed you the tape which, I believe, is when you first became involved. Shortly thereafter I phoned you and you requested that I present my ideas in writing.

Initially, I had thought to create legislation only to require that interested parties be notified of hearings. However, as I have continued to talk with officials and review the matter further, I have come to believe that much more extensive legislation is absolutely necessary. The main points which I feel are a bare minimum follow:

1. Interested parties must be notified of hearings and given an opportunity to speak. "Interested Parties" should be defined as, but not limited to, victims, their families (or survivors), residents of the area the prisoner will be released into, witnesses who testified against the prisoner and the local Prosecutor. The burden of notification should be borne by the petitioner.
2. The Board should not be an absolute authority; there must be some time between when a ruling is made by the Board and when the prisoner is actually released, during which time interested parties can present an appeal.
3. Petitioners must, at the very least, be eligible for parole.
4. Pardons should not be considered for prisoners convicted of violent crimes such as murder, rape or assault.
5. Pardons may not be considered as a remedy for other problems such as prison over-crowding or excessive expenses incurred by an inmate.
6. Pardons should only be considered for those who have shown a great degree of rehabilitation and remorse and have served at least a majority of their sentence.



These items are rather skeletal but I hope they give you a flavor of the legislation I would like you to propose. I find the present situation of an essentially un-governed Board wielding tremendous power unchecked to be frightening and totally out of place in our society. I believe that they have already made a terrible mistake in pardoning William Stepney and must be sensibly restricted by clear and specific legislation. I don't have the political or legal savy to draft the specifics of a bill, but believe that my ideas are a good beginning to provide guidelines for the Board to insure it's acting in concert with the Court's intentions.

Additionally, I would like the opportunity to speak before the Legislature in support of your bill. Please advise me on how to accomplish this. If you have any questions, you can contact me at my home at 379-2393.

Thank you for your interest in this matter.

Very truly yours,

Suzanne C. McKitis-Perillo

SCM

Register  
Citizen  
12-1-90

## A killer pardoned:

Editor of The Register Citizen:

There was nothing in the original murder sentencing of William Stepney saying "22 years to life and poor health or old age will reduce his time."

This unjust pardon is not "a reminder of what happened." We never can forget.

The money it cost the state of Connecticut to hold him can never equal the grief that murder has cost our family. Surely it took its toll on my mother to see the beaten body of her daughter in that casket.

What a fine example that murder sentence can be reduced to 6 years, and yet a sentence of 10 years can hold a young man for burglary. Stealing a life is by far beyond comparison.

My heart still thanks Judge Ann Dranginis and the Connecticut State Police for all their hard work and compassion defending my dead sister.

If we want to relieve the "overcrowded" jails, why not start with the lesser crimes of stealing, drinking and drugs and hold the murderers?

The Stepney family may smile, but her sister weeps.

Betty Hunter  
Canaan

*The writer's sister, Barbara McKitts of Bantam, was murdered by William Stepney in 1979.*

Page 4 The Litchfield Enquirer, Litchfield, Conn., Thursday, November 29, 1990

## The Litchfield Enquirer

### EDITORIAL & OPINION

## Reason for release of Morris man unclear

We believe no agency should be so powerful as to release a convicted murderer without issuing the reason on which the decision was based.

Recently a Morris man convicted of the murder of Barbara McKitts in 1979 was released by the state Pardons Board (see story, Page 1). According to the Pardons Board secretary and acting board member during the deliberations of William Stepney's case, Burton S. Yaffie, no reason needs to be given for the release.

This hardly seems fair to either the victim's family or to the public.

Following a lengthy appeals process between his initial arrest and conviction, Mr. Stepney was sent to prison in 1984 to serve a 22-year-to-life sentence. He has served only six years of that sentence and was not eligible to come before the parole board until 1994.

Mr. Yaffie said that the board was originally set up in Colonial America under the King's order and was vested with discretionary power to excuse a prisoner's sentence. The four-man board is nominated by the governor and approved by the legislature. In this case, the board reduced Mr. Stepney's original sentence to the time he has served, with no reason given.

There has been speculation since Mr. Stepney's release last week that the decision was based on his ill health and that the state regards him as no threat to society. One report suggested that the high cost of keeping him in prison was a factor. The fact remains, however, that the Pardons Board is not required to present a reason for his release. The public is not to question the decision of the board.

We find it difficult to accept that any board, on any level has such all encompassing powers over this country's judicial system.

**Noun 1.** pardon - the act of excusing a mistake or offense

Synonyms: forgiveness

**2.** pardon - a warrant granting release from punishment for an offense

Synonyms: amnesty

**3.** pardon - the formal act of liberating someone

Synonyms: free pardon, amnesty

**Verb 1.** pardon - accept an excuse for; "Please excuse my dirty hands"

Synonyms: excuse

**2.** pardon - grant a pardon to; "Ford pardoned Nixon"; "The Thanksgiving turkey was pardoned by the President"

## Legal Dictionary

**PARDON**, crim. law, pleading. A pardon is an act of grace, proceeding from the power entrusted with the execution of the laws, which exempts the individual on whom it is bestowed, from the punishment the law inflicts for a crime he has committed. 7 Pet. S. C. Rep. 160.

2. Every pardon granted to the guilty is in derogation of the law; if the pardon be equitable, the law is, bad; for where legislation and the administration of the law are perfect, pardons must be a violation of the law. But as human actions are necessarily imperfect, the pardoning power must be vested somewhere in order to prevent injustice, when it is ascertained that an error has been committed.

3. The subject will be considered with regard, 1. To the kinds of pardons. 2. By whom they are to be granted. 3. For what offences. 4. How to be taken advantage of. 5. Their effect.

4.-Sec. 1. Pardons are general or special. 1. The former are express, when an act of the legislature is passed expressly directing that offences of a certain class; shall be pardoned, as in the case of an act of amnesty. See Amnesty. A general pardon is implied by the repeal of a penal statute, because, unless otherwise provided by law, an offence against such statute while it was in force cannot be punished, and the offender goes free. 2 Overt. 423. 2. Special pardons are those which are granted by the pardoning power for particular cases.

5. Pardons are also divided into absolute and conditional. The former are those which free the criminal without any condition whatever; the latter are those to which a condition is annexed, which must be performed before the pardon can have any effect. Bac. Ab. Pardon, E; 2 Caines, R. 57; 1 Bailey, 283; 2 Bailey 516. But see 4 Call, R. 85.

6.-Sec. 2. The constitution of the United States gives to the, president in general terms, "the power to grant reprieves and pardons for offences against the United States." The same power is given generally to the governors of the several states to grant pardons for crimes committed against their respective states, but in some of them the consent of the legislature or one of its branches is required.

7.-Sec. 3. Except in the case of impeachment, for which a pardon cannot be granted, the pardoning power may grant a pardon of all offences against the government, and for any sentence or judgment. But such a pardon does not operate to discharge the interest which third persons may have acquired in the judgment; as, where a penalty was incurred in violation of the embargo laws, and the custom house officers became entitled to one-half of the penalty, the pardon did not discharge that. 4 Wash. C.C.R. 64. See 2 Bay, 565; 2 Whart. 440; 7 J. J. Marsh. 131.

8.-Sec. 4. When the pardon is general, either by an act of amnesty, or by the repeal of a penal law, it is not necessary to plead it, because the court is bound, ex officio, to take notice of it. And the criminal cannot even waive such pardon, because by his admittance, no one can give the court power to punish him, when it judicially appears there is no law to do it. But when the pardon is special, to avail the criminal it must judicially appear that it has been accepted, and for this reason it must be specially pleaded. 7 Pet. R. 150, 162.

9.-Sec. 5. The effect of a pardon is to protect from punishment the criminal for the offence pardoned, but for no other. 1 Porter, 475. It seems that the pardon of an assault and battery, which afterwards becomes murder by the death of the person beaten, would not operate as a pardon of the murder. 12 Pick. 496. In general, the effect of a full pardon is to restore the convict to all his rights. But to this there are some exceptions: 1st. When the criminal has been guilty of perjury, a pardon will not qualify him to be a witness at any time afterwards. 2d. When one was convicted of an offence by which he became civilly dead, a pardon did not affect or annul the second marriage of his wife, nor the sale of his property by persons appointed to administer on his estate, nor divest his heirs of the interest acquired in his estate in consequence of his civil death. 10 Johns. R. 232, 483.

10.-Sec. 6. All contracts, made for the buying or procuring a pardon for a convict, are void. And such contracts will be declared null by a court of equity, on the ground that they are opposed to public policy. 4 Bouv. Inst. n. 3857. Vide, generally, Bac. Ab. h.t.; Com. Dig. h.t.; Nels. Ab. h.t.; Vin. Ab. h.t.; 13 Petersd. Ab. h.t.; Dane's Ab. h.t.; 3 lust. 233 to 240; Hawk. b. 2, c. 37; 1 Chit. Cr. L. 762 to 778; 2 Russ. on Cr. 595 Arch. Cr. Pl. 92; Stark. Cr. Pl. 368, 380.

## Related Words

accept, acquittance, allow, allowance, benevolence, clear, clearance, clearing, clemency, commiseration, compassion, compurgation, condolence, condonation, decontaminate, destigmatization, destigmatize, discharge, disculpation, dismiss, dismissal, dispense from, exculpate, exculpation, excusal, exempt, exempt from, exemption, exonerate, favor, feeling, forbearance, forgiving, free, give absolute, give quarter, grace, grant amnesty to, grant forgiveness, grant immunity, grant remission, have mercy upon, have pity, humanity, immunity, indemnification, indemnity, indulge, indulgence, justification, justify, kindness, leniency, let go, let off, let up on, liberate, melt, mercy, mitigation, nonpros, overlooking, pathos, pity, purgation, purge, purging, quarter, quash the charge, quietus, quittance, redemption, relax, release, relent, relief, remission of sin, reprieve, ruth, self-pity, set free, shrive, thrive, small-town, spare, sparing, sympathy, take pity on, thaw, tolerate, verdict of acquittal, vindicate, vindication, whitewash, withdraw the charge





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## Department of Correction

24 Wolcott Hill Road  
Wethersfield, CT 06109

## General Information

Telephone:  
860-692-7480

## Public Information Office

Telephone:  
(860) 692-7780  
Fax:  
(860) 692-7783  
E-Mail:  
[doc.pio@po.state.ct.us](mailto:doc.pio@po.state.ct.us)

## Recruitment

Telephone:  
(860)-692-7600  
Fax:  
(860)-692-7615  
E-Mail:  
[doc.recruitment@po.state.ct.us](mailto:doc.recruitment@po.state.ct.us)

## Inmate Trust Fund

P.O. Box 290800  
Wethersfield, CT 06129-0800

## Pardon Statistics

Date	Petitions Reviewed at Pre-Screening	Petitions Denied at Pre-Screening	Petitions Denied at Full Hearing	Granted Pardons
Nov 2004	136	68	9	59
Feb 2005	113	52	13	48
May 2005	61	16	13	32
Aug 2005	74	20	7	47
Nov 2005	99	33	5	61
Feb 2006	69	24	7	38
May 2006	105	41	3	61
Aug 2006	104	33	6	60
Nov 2006	115	46	10	61
Feb 2007	105	42	3	59
May 2007	111	25	2	84

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**Department of  
Correction**  
24 Wolcott Hill Road  
Wethersfield, CT 06109

**General Information**  
Telephone:  
860-692-7480

**Public Information Office**  
Telephone:  
(860) 692-7780  
Fax:  
(860) 692-7783  
E-Mail:  
[doc.pio@po.state.ct.us](mailto:doc.pio@po.state.ct.us)

**Recruitment**  
Telephone:  
(860)-692-7600  
Fax:  
(860)-692-7615  
E-Mail:  
[doc.recruitment@po.state.ct.us](mailto:doc.recruitment@po.state.ct.us)

**Inmate Trust Fund**  
P.O. Box 290800  
Wethersfield, CT 06129-0800  
Telephone:  
(860)-692-7670

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## Parole Statistics January 1, 2007

<b>CT Parolees Supervised in CT</b>	2,565
<b>Out of State Parolees Supervised in CT</b>	185
<b>CT Parolees Supervised out of state</b>	240
<b>Supervision Total</b>	2,990
<b>Racial Breakdown</b>	
Black	46.0%
White	23.4%
Hispanic	29.9%
Other	0.6%
<b>Parole Violators Confined</b>	482
<b>Granting Rate (last year average)</b>	83%

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