

July 30, 2016

Dear Judge Zagel,

It has been almost five years since I last put pen to paper to plead the case for leniency and mercy for my husband Rod and our family. It seems like a lifetime ago.

I looked back at the letter I wrote last time, and everything I wrote is still applicable today. The only difference is that the thing we feared most came true when you imposed a 14-year sentence upon Rod.

We have fought hard over the last five years to keep our family together. I did the quick math and estimate we have spent over 1,200 hours talking on the telephone with Rod. He calls every night. I can think of only a handful of nights that he couldn't call because the phone lines were down. 300 minutes a month (400 during November and December) are allotted to each inmate, and we use them up. We can also email him, but unfortunately we can only send text. I cannot send photos of special events or video of milestones that he is missing. We have also visited Rod in Denver more than 20 times, and going to the low security facility in the first few years was particularly hard for our daughters.

Why do we put in the effort? We put in the effort because Rod is a great husband and father and he is worth the wait. Through the force of his dedication to our family, he has remained relevant in our lives. Rod has been there with advice and a sympathetic ear for our daughters as they struggle through life with a very recognizable last name and the burden that comes with it. He has been there to encourage them when they are down and to guide them in decisions that need to be made. He has cheered on their accomplishments and consoled them when they have fallen short of their goals.

Rod has been a support to me in my role as sole breadwinner and single parent - a position that is more difficult than I could have ever imagined. Always the eternal optimist, Rod has helped me through many dark days, when the responsibilities seemed overwhelming and unending.

The unfortunate fact, though, is that all the phone calls and emails and visits cannot fill the void of his absence. They cannot come close to replacing his physical presence in our lives. There have been milestones missed that can never be made up. Amy will never graduate high school again, or go to prom, or have her first day of college. For Amy, who is turning 20 days before the hearing, even the good memories from before our trouble started have been spoiled by what came after. Without Rod here, events that should be joyful celebrations are just cruel reminders of his absence, with an undercurrent of sadness at every school play, piano recital, or ice-skating competition. As Annie's early childhood begins to fade away, her ability to have a normal relationship with her father also diminishes as he has now been imprisoned for one third of her life.

What is hard for us, is torture for Rod. Rod knows the short window of Amy and Annie's childhoods is rapidly closing, and not being able to be here to provide for, protect, and support them properly is the worst punishment you could inflict upon him. I know he has suffered profoundly knowing the harm he has done to his family, and that suffering grows more and more with every year that passes. I know it affects him more than the loss of his office, status, and liberty all put together.

Rod has a quote from the bible that he is fond of that speaks about suffering being a fire that cleanses you of impurities, just as it does with metal in a forge. All the letters of support submitted by his fellow inmates illustrate the quote and reinforce what I know about Rod -that his compassion for others is greater now than ever, and that he is willing to go out of his way to help those who find themselves at the same place, and in the same position, instead of wallowing in bitterness.

I truly believe that if one purpose of Rod's incarceration is to make him a better person and able to serve our society in a more selfless way, that has been accomplished. I also truly believe that if another purpose of his incarceration is to punish him for his actions almost eight years ago, that also has been accomplished as I have borne witness to his suffering.

The future of my children, family, and husband, lies within your power and judgment. Please reunite me with my husband of almost 26 years so that we can go on to love and support each other, and raise our children together. Please let Rod come home and be the father that our daughters need and deserve. Please give Annie the chance for a normal happy childhood, that has slipped away for Amy. I am pleading with you, indeed begging you, to please be merciful.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Patricia Blagojevich". The script is cursive and fluid.

Patti Blagojevich

Deborah Mell

August 4, 2016

Honorable James Zagel
Dirksen Federal Building
219 S. Dearborn St
Chicago, IL 60604

Dear Judge Zagel:

My name is Deborah Mell. My sister is Patti Blagojevich. I am writing to urge leniency in the upcoming resentencing of my brother-in-law.

My relationship and experiences with Rod are different than most. I've seen him as a loving father, a devoted husband, and a thoughtful friend. The man I know is very different than the one who is caricatured in the press.

I've witnessed his generosity and genuine passion for public service on full display. Rod loved helping people, particularly children.

The circumstances surrounding Rod's indictment, trial, and eventual sentencing has devastated the lives of my sister and their two beautiful children. His absence left a huge void within the family. With each passing graduation, Christmas morning, and dance recital, the people he loves most in this world have had to learn to carry on without him. All that is left is a faint memory of a happier time.

Their family will never be the same; the trajectory of their lives forever altered.

That is why I know deep down in my heart that Rod will forever be regretful of the circumstances that have caused him to be incarcerated in the first place.

I hope you will take this into consideration in advance of his resentencing. I want to personally thank you for taking the time to read my letter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Deborah Mell". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Deborah Mell

Judge James Zagel
Dirkson Federal Building
219 S. Dearborn St
Chicago, IL 60604

Dear Judge Zagel,

I am writing today to ask for leniency when you resentence my Brother-in-Law Rod Blagojevich. I first want to thank you for taking the time to read this letter. I know your time is valuable so I will be brief.

I have spent a good amount of time with my sister and Nieces since the conviction of their Father. I have noticed the toll it has taken on them. I know my nieces have not had one night where they felt safe since he has been away. Despite what has transpired in your court and in the public arena, I can say Rod is a loving and devoted Father and Husband. I know he calls them every night and is trying desperately to be a part of their lives, but a 15 minute phone call can never replace having him in the home. Patti does her best to travel to Colorado to visit as much as possible but it is difficult since she is now the only source of income for the family. I ask that you take this into consideration when you resentence him. Thank you again for your time.

Sincerely,

Richard Mell

Richard Mell

Judge James B. Zagel
United States District Court
Northern District of Illinois
219 S. Dearborn Street
Chicago, IL 60604

July 10, 2016

Dear Judge Zagel

I am writing to request that Rod Blagojevich receive leniency in his sentence. I met Rod in 1992 when we both ran and were elected to the Illinois House of Representatives. During the time he was a member of the Illinois Legislature we worked very closely together on many issues such as women's reproductive rights, gay rights and early childhood development, to name a few.

When he left the Illinois House and ran for Congress I was proud to be his campaign manager. His record in Springfield was that of a leader who cared about everyday people, who worked hard to pass bills and who knew how to form coalitions to get things done. He convinced members from unlikely districts to support gay rights and a woman's right to choose. He was instrumental in reaching out across the aisle to gain support for childcare funding. Because of his strong leadership on so many progressive issues and despite the fact that one of his primary opponents was a well-respected progressive woman, his colleagues, about 18 of them, endorsed only Rod. They did that because they saw first hand what he had accomplished and what he cared about.

While he was in Congress and as Governor, I was a member of his kitchen cabinet. In that capacity I was privy to decision making around policy and programs and I came to understand some of the things that motivated him and were in his heart. I learned that his values were very much a function of his roots. In the years his mother was alive, I believe he spoke to her everyday. He never forgot the struggles his family endured to make ends meet and give their sons a better life. That reality informed almost every policy decision he made.

In 2001, Congress was debating the reauthorization of the 1996 Welfare Reform Bill. Rod was running for Governor at the time, his political consultants all argued that he needed to cast a vote that would show he was "tough" on welfare recipients, that the politics of the campaign dictated he do that. He disregarded that political advice because he thought that voting that way would hurt poor mothers and their kids. He chose to be on their side rather than on a politically popular side.

As Governor those same sensibilities informed his priorities and budgets. He expanded early childhood education, he extended healthcare to over 500,000 poor families, he raised the minimum wage twice and he created a children's healthcare program that was not only free to all, but covered non citizens as well. None of these things were easy and most were not that politically popular at the time.

When there was evidence of significant abuse at a youth facility run by a major religious organization he withstood the pressure from the head of that religious community and many, many politicians and other influential members of the faith and he withdrew state funding. He made the decision that the children's safety was paramount and disregarded an almost constant stream of lobbying from "righteous" community leaders who sought to protect an institution and not the children under its care

What I wish to convey through these examples is that Rod Blagojevich as a public servant has done good things for people. The substantive things he has accomplished should not be ignored. He is a complicated and complex person who hasn't always gotten it right, but he is not just the person we all heard on the tapes. There is clearly another side that can be seen not only through the work he has done but also in the love and devotion he has unfailing shown to his wife and daughters.

We are no longer friends; we haven't spoken since April 2008. I do not write this letter out of friendship but rather to do what I think is right and what I think is fair. I want you to understand a side of Rod Blagojevich that I don't believe has been depicted through the trials. He has paid a dear price for some of his actions. Now when leniency can be offered I think that some of his other, more noble actions should be taken into account. I sincerely hope that I have been able to convey to you how deeply I feel that Rod Blagojevich deserves your leniency.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Carol Ronen". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the word "Sincerely,".

Carol Ronen
State Senator, Retired

Dear Honorable Judge Zapel,

I am writing to you on behalf of my close friend Mr. Rod Blagojevich. I consider it to be an honor and both a privilege to have had the opportunity to know and become friends with Rod "Gov". I have known him for about three years now. We were together serving time inside the fence, at the FCI Englewood low-prison. Thank God that we are both here at the Camp together here in Englewood.


I come from Texas, like a lot of guys here, far from my home and family. But I thank God that I found a good core of Christian Brothers that make time to share and pray for each other, and the "Gov" is apart of that core. I have come to know the "Gov" as a true and humble person, God fearing and a genuine good hearted person.

It doesn't matter who they are, or where they come from. He helps a lot of people especially the guys that are trying to get their GED's. I always see him in the gym a lot working out when I workout. He runs a lot too and is always in the library reading books. He always makes time to talk to you, to give you a word of encouragement, or to be an attentive listener.

I know that he loves his family because he is always asking me about mine as I do about his.


The camp is not as hard as it was when we were in the low, but it is still hard to be away from our families. He is a good man, a God fearing man, and a Great Father. I don't see him as a criminal,

I see him as a child of God, blessed and redeemed.
I hope that He can be back with his family soon.
Thank you for your time, and God Bless you.

Sincerely, 



July 08, 2016


Federal Correctional Institution
9595 W. Quincy Avenue
Littleton, CO 80123

Honorable Judge Zagel:

I am writing this personal reference letter on behalf of Mr. Rod Blagojevich. Rod was transferred from the Federal Correctional Institute, which is a low security facility, to the Federal Prison Camp, both located in Englewood, Colorado. The camp is a minimum security facility that primarily houses short term inmates that are soon to be released back to the community.

I became acquainted with Rod when he volunteered to help me in the laundry during his free time. Initially, he worked for the education program as a tutor for inmates that were studying to achieve a GED, and is currently working at the library assisting inmates looking for specific reading materials, as well as helping them with "cop-outs", which are requests for general camp services.

Rod has no entitlement issues, does not display any narcissistic behavior, and is not self-centered. Rod is not your typical inmate as he is always respectful, and maintains a positive attitude. I find him very eager to be home with his family that he loves deeply and misses greatly.

Sincerely,




July 7, 2016

To the Honorable Judge Zagel,

My name is [REDACTED] and I am currently serving a 48 month sentence at Englewood FPC. While at Englewood I have had the opportunity to meet a lot of inmates from different walks of life. Mr. Blagojevich is a fellow inmate that has really made an impact and experience and mindset since being incarcerated. He and I have long talks that I find give me hope and encouragement for my release and my future. No matter what is going on in our lives he has this awesome outlook on life. The inmate life is extremely humbling, and at times feels very unfaair. Rod has managed to make the most of it, and in the process helped me do the same. We are assigned jobs like teaching the GED classes and working in the law library and Rod always keeps a positive attitude throughout.

I understand that he has been through a lot since he was charged aand although I didn't know him when he was Governor, I feel that Mr. Blagojevich has changed a lot of inmates lives, including his own, for the better. He is a very humble human being that always has a smile on his face and is constantly willing to help.

Your Honor, I pray that you look at Mr. Blagojevich as a man who has paid the maximum debt for his actions, being taken away from those he loves, as well as no longer being able to serve the public as Governor.

Thank you for your time,

[REDACTED]

Federal Prison Camp- Englewood
9595 W. Quincy Ave
Littleton, CO 80123

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

Melissa A. Matuzak, Attorney at Law, hereby certifies that the foregoing, Defendant's Supplemental Sentencing Letters, was served on August 8, 2016, in accordance with Fed.R.Crim.P. 49, Fed.R.Civ.P. 5, LR 5.5, and the General Order on Electronic Case Filing (ECF) pursuant to the district court's system as to ECF filers.

/s Melissa A. Matuzak
MELISSA A. MATUZAK