

February 25, 2016

Dear Rachel Weiss,

My name is Kari Tuttle Knoop. I am a non-violent felon in the state of Montana.

In 2002 I was charged with accountability for forgery in the amount of \$1080.00 and signed a plea agreement for a 3 year deferred sentence. The Judge sentenced me to 5 years deferred.

My crime had nothing to do with drugs, however, I was honest on my Pre-sentence Investigation about my drug history. My honesty in doing this called for me being subjected to random UA's by Probation & Parole.

Within a year I failed several UA's and I was revoked from my 5 year deferred sentence and given a 10 year sentence, 5 DOC and 5 suspended, in December 2004.

I was sentenced to the Intensive Challenge Program (ICP), aka women's boot camp and was accepted into the program in February of 2005. In this program I learned many things about myself, my behavior and my addiction. I took classes such as Anger Management, Cognitive Principles and Restructuring (CP&R), Parenting, Life Skills, Matrix, Relationships & Co-Dependency, and also Victimology. I successfully completed this program with all my certificates as well as 6 months of Pre-release following the program.

I relapsed in 2007 and went to prison. I did 22 months in prison and during my time there I paid off my \$1080.00 in restitution. I then went to 60 days in Alcohol and Drug Treatment (ADT) at Passages, then I went to Pre-release also at Passages in Billings, MT. I completed my DOC time on September 16, 2009.

During my DOC time I had one write up while in pre-release, I had no other infractions. I also did well while on the suspended portion. I had no infractions or relapses for 4 years and 2 months. During this time I repeatedly asked my Probation Officer's to please start the paper work for early release to which a reply of "We'll start it next week.", Or "I'll work on it.", or one of several other excuses.

In April 2013 I relapsed and took it upon myself to go to District II Alcohol and Drug Treatment and paid for a chemical dependency evaluation. This evaluation recommended that I do an aftercare program which I graciously did. My Probation Officer filed revocation papers without giving me a disciplinary hearing. I was sentenced to 5 years DOC again and recommended to go to Passages for an evaluation.

The fact that I was in an aftercare program and stayed clean and sober for 4 ½ years of my suspended time speaks volumes about the tools I learned via DOC. The fact that I have not been charged with any new felony charges in over 14 years should not go unnoticed. The fact that I hold down 2 jobs, pay my taxes, pay my child support and am an overall law abiding citizen who has had her restitution paid off for 8 years should account for something.

I feel that the Department of Corrections is a revolving door that probation officers keep felons in. I have seen more women go to the Passages facility who were ordered by a judge to go to Elkhorn Treatment Center because they have severe addiction and behavioral problems, only to be screened at Passages and recommended to go to ADT for 60 days then pre-release for 6 months instead. In my situation I was referred to aftercare, my probation officer told me I would do 120 days clear conduct then go out on conditional release and continue my aftercare program. Instead I was sanctioned to 9

months of treatment at Elkhorn. Again my success for those four years shouldn't have gone unnoticed by the powers that be at the Passages facility, however, it was.

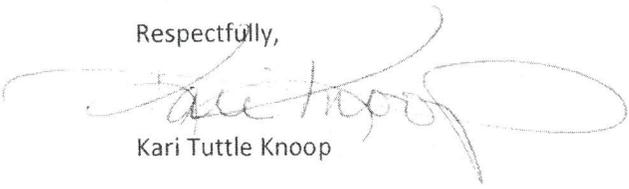
In the big scheme of things I see myself as a non-violent offender who was convicted in 2003 for accountability for forgery in the amount of \$1080.00. I have been revoked a few times because I made bad choices using marijuana, however, I did pay off my restitution in 2008 and have committed no new crimes in 14 years. My 10 year max crime has turned into 15 years. My \$1080.00 crime has turned into just over \$1 million for taxpayers and the state of Montana. This \$1 million includes incarceration in jails, prisons, treatment facilities, pre-releases, court appearances, court appointed attorneys, UA's, medical care, foster care, child medical care, wages for corrections officers, police officers and probation officers, and I'm sure I am missing a few other costs regarding processing and incarcerating me.

Something more to think about in my situation is that the bill for me continues to add up. I am at Elkhorn and when I complete this program on May 16, 2016 I will then have to go to pre-release in Butte, MT and use resources there that will cost taxpayers and the state of Montana thousands of dollars more for the 6 months I am there. I know how to reintegrate into the community. I have a home to go back to in Sidney, MT as well as 2 jobs to report back to. I don't understand why it is deemed necessary for me to take up a bed at the pre-release, find a job that I will only have for 6 months and cost the taxpayers and the state of Montana thousands of dollars more for the 6 months I am there.

I feel that I have learned a lot about myself and my addiction and paid my debt to society by 2014 since I did pay my restitution and did well for 4 years and 2 months. One thousand eighty dollars has turned into over one million dollars for the taxpayers and the state of Montana for a non-violent offense. This seems absurd to me and I believe it needs to be looked at and changed. We read every day in the newspaper how overcrowded the jails and prisons and pre-releases and treatment centers are, perhaps someone needs to find a different avenue for non-violent offenders other than keeping them in the system for so long for a minor slip. I believe that I could have done well on conditional release and went to aftercare.

Thank you for your time reading this. I do hope it is helpful for future non-violent offenders.

Respectfully,



Kari Tuttle Knoop

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C/o ETC

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Dear Judge Mustafson

My name is Tina Palagi. I am currently incarcerated at the women's Prison on a Revocation of my suspended sentence & have a no parole restriction placed on that. I also have federal time to complete as well. I have been sitting on this revocation since 2009. I understand you are active with the initiative on Sentencing Uniform, thus the reason for my letter.

In the seven years I have been here, I have seen girls come & go - some of them numerous times, I see girls come to the prison for showing a cell phone or getting on facebook - some girls who release come here and others go to passages or sit in overcrowded county jails on sanctions.

I want to know what I can do to become involved. The Sentencing in different counties are inconsistent as well with revocations.

The Dept of Corrections is very involved with re-entry.

Well watching the recidivism rate at the Womens Prison alone, I don't feel wt us working.

There are no programs for us to learn anything - for those of us who are at low risk to reoffend we are pretty much a warm body.

I have so many ideas that could help educate women to find work as soon as we are released. I have inquired about beauty school education, correspondence schools, computer software education, but am stopped with no room, can't have limited internet for online classes, etc.

Would you please be willing to let me know what I can do to assist with the problem of overcrowding and recidivism - I am willing to do whatever I can with my limited resources.

Thank you for your time

Sincerely

Tina Palagi AO#2141515