

## LETTER IN SUPPORT OF STRAWBERRY HAMPTON'S CLEMENCY PETITION

May 8, 2019

### VIA EMAIL AND US MAIL

The Honorable J.B. Pritzker, Governor  
The Honorable Juliana Stratton, Lt. Governor  
Office of the Governor  
James R. Thompson Center  
100 W. Randolph, 16-100  
Chicago, IL 60601

Re: Clemency for Deon Strawberry Hampton

Dear Governor Pritzker and Lt. Governor Stratton:

The undersigned write to urge you to immediately grant clemency to Strawberry Hampton, a Black transgender woman in the custody of the Illinois Department of Corrections (“IDOC”).<sup>1</sup> On numerous occasions, Ms. Hampton endured sexual violence and harassment both at the hands of correctional officers and as a result of correctional officers allowing (and sometimes encouraging) people incarcerated with Ms. Hampton to assault her. When Ms. Hampton reported this abuse, officers retaliated against her by writing her false disciplinary tickets that resulted in her placement in prolonged solitary confinement. During this time, Ms. Hampton was unable to earn good time. Additionally, throughout her incarceration, IDOC officials prevented her from engaging in programming and work opportunities because they claimed she would be a distraction to the men imprisoned with her. If correctional officers had not imposed false disciplinary tickets on Ms. Hampton, she would have been at home with her family in February 2019. If she had been allowed to earn good time through programming and job opportunities, she could have been released from custody much sooner. Her current release date is November 27, 2019.

In December 2018, Ms. Hampton won an important victory for trans-rights when a federal judge recognized that the harassment and abuse she has experienced in IDOC custody constituted a form of discrimination and that the IDOC’s practices related to housing trans women were also unlawful. As a result of this decision, IDOC appears to be making some progress in matters related to the housing of trans women. This happened as a result of Ms. Hampton’s courage and her steadfast determination to reveal the truth about her life inside IDOC facilities. Yet, she still remains behind bars directly as a result of the IDOC’s discriminatory policies and practices.

As further explained in the attached Petition for Clemency, Ms. Hampton’s sentence has been extended an additional nine months because she is a trans woman who spoke out about the

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<sup>1</sup> A description of each undersigned organization can be found in the attached Appendix.

abuse and violence she suffered on a daily basis during her incarceration. Because she spoke out, officers attempted to silence her, and in doing so extended her imprisonment. Please take immediate action to correct this grave injustice and allow Ms. Hampton to be home with her community so she can continue her leadership for the rights of trans people and survivors everywhere. You campaigned on a promise to bring justice and equity to Illinois. Please make good on that promise by granting clemency to Strawberry Hampton.

Sincerely,

Affinity Community Services  
Black Lives Matter Chicago  
Black Youth Project 100  
Black Youth Project 100 Chicago  
Business and Professional People for the Public Interest  
Chicago Alliance Against Sexual Exploitation  
Chicago Coalition for the Homeless  
Chicago Community Bond Fund  
Chicago Metropolitan Battered Women's Network  
Children and Family Justice Center  
Community Renewal Society  
Domestic Violence Legal Clinic  
Edwin F. Mandel Legal Aid Clinic at the University of Chicago Law School  
Healing To Action  
Illinois Coalition Against Domestic Violence  
Illinois Coalition Against Sexual Assault  
Indivisible Chicago  
John Howard Association of Illinois  
Lambda Legal  
Life Span  
LimeRed  
Mijente  
National Association for the Advancement of Colored People – Westside Branch  
Resilience  
She Votes Illinois  
Social Change  
The Voices and Faces Project  
TransLife Care Program at Chicago House & Social Service Agency  
Unitarian Universalist Prison Ministry of Illinois  
Voices of Reason  
Women's March – Illinois

Cc: Deputy Governor Sol Flores, Deputy Governor Dan Hynes, Deputy Governor Christian Mitchell, Deputy Governor Jesse Ruiz

## APPENDIX

### LIST OF ORGANIZATIONS

1. **Affinity Community Services** is a social justice organization serving the needs of the Black LGBTQ community of Chicago with a particular focus on Black women. Affinity Community Services envisions a society where being your authentic self is not a liability and differences are fully embraced.
2. **Black Lives Matter (“BLM”) Chicago** is an organization that fights for justice with families most impacted by race-based violence and marginalization of Black communities, while working to create just and equitable systems. Black Lives Matter Chicago works to end state violence and criminalization of Black communities by deconstructing the white supremacist, capitalist patriarchy.
3. **Black Youth Project 100 (“BYP100”)** is a national member-based organization of Black 18- to 35-year-old activists and organizers. BYP100 is dedicated to creating justice and freedom for all Black people. BYP100 does this work through building a network focused on transformative leadership development, direct action organizing, advocacy, and political education using a Black queer feminist lens.
4. **Black Youth Project 100 (“BYP100”) Chicago** is the Chicago chapter of BYP100.
5. **Business and Professional People for the Public Interest (“BPI”)** is an independent public interest law and policy center that strives to resolve compelling issues of social justice and quality of life in the Chicago region. Today BPI’s work is focused on housing and community development, justice reform, public education, and political reform.
6. **Chicago Alliance Against Sexual Exploitation (“CAASE”)** is a not-for profit organization that envisions a community free from all forms of sexual exploitation, including sexual assault and the commercial sex trade. CAASE addresses the culture, institutions, and individuals that perpetrate, profit from, or support sexual exploitation. CAASE’s work includes prevention, policy reform, community engagement, and legal services.
7. **Chicago Coalition for the Homeless (“CCH”)** is a non-profit organization dedicated to advocating for public policies that curb and can ultimately end homelessness. CCH leads strategic campaigns, community outreach, and public policy initiatives that target the lack of affordable housing in metropolitan Chicago and across Illinois. In addition, CCH presses for access to jobs, training, and public schools.
8. **Chicago Community Bond Fund (“CCBF”)** is an organization that pays bond for people charged with crimes in Cook County, Illinois. Through a revolving fund, CCBF supports individuals whose communities cannot afford to pay the bonds themselves and who have been impacted by structural violence. CCBF also engages in public education about the role of bond in the criminal legal system and advocates for the abolition of money bond.

9. **Chicago Metropolitan Battered Women’s Network** is a collaborative membership organization dedicated to improving the lives of those impacted by domestic violence through education, public policy and advocacy, and the connection of community members to direct service providers. The Network envisions an end to our society’s tolerance of domestic violence.
10. **Children and Family Justice Center (“CFJC”)** is a comprehensive children’s law office and part of the Bluhm Legal Clinic at Northwestern Pritzker School of Law. At the CFJC, attorneys and law students work together to promote justice for children, adolescents, and their families through direct legal representation, policy advocacy, and law reform.
11. **Community Renewal Society (“CRS”)** is a progressive, faith-based organization that works to eliminate race and class barriers. Founded in 1882, CRS informs, organizes, and trains both communities and individuals to advocate for social and economic justice.
12. **Domestic Violence Legal Clinic (“DVLC”)** provides free civil legal assistance to low-income individuals in Cook County. DVLC breaks the cycle of domestic violence, helping survivors escape the isolation of abuse and regain control of their lives. DVLC’s holistic advocacy combines emergency and long-term legal aid and ensures that survivors and their children can escape and stay away from an abusive relationship.
13. **Edwin F. Mandel Legal Aid Clinic** is the clinical program of the University of Chicago Law School. The Clinic specializes in the areas of criminal justice, civil rights, employment discrimination, the rights of the mentally ill, and low-income housing development. The Clinic engages in litigation, appellate advocacy, legislative advocacy, and community-based advocacy and transactional work.
14. **Healing To Action** grew out of the Coalition Against Workplace Sexual Violence, a cross-movement collaboration between Chicago’s labor and anti-violence movements that started in 2012. Healing to Action advances a worker-led movement to end gender violence and envisions worker leaders creating safe, just workplaces and stable economic futures.
15. **Illinois Coalition Against Domestic Violence (“ICADV”)** is a statewide voice for survivors of domestic violence and their children. With over 50 member organizations providing direct service to survivors, ICADV works towards ending domestic violence in Illinois.
16. **Illinois Coalition Against Sexual Assault (“ICASA”)** is a not-for-profit corporation of 30 community-based sexual assault crisis centers working together to end sexual violence. Each center provides 24-hour crisis intervention services, counseling, and advocacy for victims of sexual assault and their significant others. Each center presents prevention education programs in Illinois schools and communities.
17. **Indivisible Chicago** is a group of Chicago-area residents alarmed by the 2016 election and committed to resisting the Trump agenda. Individual Chicago, inspired by the Indivisible Guide, engages with public servants to create a just society by promoting progressive values and grassroots engagement.

18. **John Howard Association of Illinois (“JHA”)** is a nonpartisan organization that independently monitors correctional facilities, policies and practices, and advances reforms needed to achieve a fair, humane, and effective criminal justice system. JHA’s vision for Illinois is to achieve a smaller, rehabilitative criminal justice system that supports incarcerated individuals so they may return to society as productive citizens.
19. **Lambda Legal** is the oldest and largest national legal organization whose mission is to achieve full recognition of the civil rights of lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, transgender people, and everyone living with HIV through impact litigation, education, and public policy work.
20. **Life Span** provides comprehensive services for women and children, enabling them to live without violence, build upon their strengths and become self-sufficient. By defining domestic violence as a crime as well as a social problem, Life Span is committed to providing victims of domestic violence and sexual assault a range of options, including legal services, advocacy, and counseling.
21. **LimeRed** is a design firm committed to designing for social impact. LimeRed is a Certified B Corporation and woman-owned business with over 15 years of experience designing brands, business strategy, and digital products. Using immersive, empathetic, and structured processes, LimeRed co-creates equitable, thought-provoking experiences to amplify influence and impact social change.
22. **Mijente** is a national digital and grassroots hub for Latinx and Chicanx movement building and organizing that seeks to increase the profile of policy issues that matter to its communities and increase the participation of Latinx and Chicanx people in the broader movements for racial, economic, climate, and gender justice.
23. **National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (“NAACP”) – Westside Branch** is the NAACP’s Chicago-based branch on the West Side of the City. The NAACP is a national civil rights, non-profit, membership organization whose mission is to ensure the political, educational, social, and economic equality of rights of all persons and to eliminate race-based discrimination. The elimination of racial prejudice among citizens, which would include racially-motivated policing, is identified as one of the NAACP’s major objectives.
24. **Resilience** (formerly Rape Victim Advocates) is an independent, not-for-profit organization dedicated to the healing and empowerment of sexual assault survivors through non-judgmental crisis intervention counseling, individual and group trauma therapy, and medical and legal advocacy in the greater Chicago metropolitan area. Resilience provides public education and institutional advocacy in order to improve the treatment of sexual assault survivors and to effect positive change in policies and public attitudes toward sexual assault.
25. **She Votes Illinois** is a statewide political action committee aimed at highlighting the important of women’s voices in elections, government, and policymaking. She Votes Illinois’ work focuses on three things: voting, education, and getting more women involved in politics.

26. **Social Change** is a national non-profit committed to the radical transformation of protest into progress by working together with a network of organizers, lawyers, legislators, journalists, artists, and other storytellers seeking to improve the social reality of communities of color, to support and defend impoverished and divested households, and to uplift institutions committed to transforming lives and communities through strategic partnerships, community capacity building, and technical assistance.
27. **The Voices and Faces Project** is an award-winning non-profit storytelling initiative created to bring the names, faces, and testimonies of survivors of gender-based violence to the attention of the public. Through educational and advocacy trainings, survivor story archives, and writing workshops, The Voices and Faces Project seeks to change minds, hearts, and public policies through the power of personal testimony.
28. **TransLife Care Program at Chicago House & Social Service Agency (“TLC”)** provides comprehensive programming and support to transgender individuals. TLC provides a variety of resources and services related to medical, housing, legal, and employment.
29. **Unitarian Universalist Prison Ministry of Illinois (“UUPMI”)** equips Unitarian Universalists in Illinois to transform institutions and support people harmed by the prison industrial complex. UUPMI fosters connections between UU congregations and Illinois prisoners by offering liberal religious ministry inside prisons, advocating for policy changes related to prisons, and teaching radical hospitality to congregations welcoming formerly incarcerated people.
30. **Voices of Reason** is a community organization that connects progressive voters in central Illinois. Voices of Reason has grown through social media into an active group that meets online and in person through events, rallies, study groups, marketing, and more. Voices of Reason has worked on successfully passing the Equal Rights Amendment, coordinating people to March For Our Lives rally, and many social justice concerns.
31. **Women’s March – Illinois** is the Illinois chapter affiliate of the Women’s March Network. The mission of Women’s March is to harness the political power of diverse women and their communities to create transformative social change and fight for the collective liberation of all women and femmes. Women’s March is a women-led movement providing intersectional education on a diverse range of issues and creating entry points for new grassroots activists and organizers to engage in their local communities through trainings, outreach programs, and events.