

03/29/2021

Dear Senator,


My name is Noemi Vega-Vasquez and I'm writing this letter in regard to Measure 11 reform and my husband Gustavo Vega Flores, an inmate at Snake River Correctional facility. First off, I want to offer you my deepest gratitude for taking the time to read my letter. My husband and I have been together for what seems a lifetime and over the time I've been with him, I've seen growth and change. He is a man of his word. His deepest desire is to serve his family, love his family, and care for his family. We have two kids, an eleven-year-old son and a seven-year-old daughter. My husband has been gone for most of our kid's upbringing but because he thought the lifestyle, he chose was best for our family at the time. He was far from wrong. He committed a crime that fell under measure 11 statues and he is paying the price for it now. My husband is sentenced to serve 13 years and of that time, half has been completed. During that time, I have seen my husband grow. He is not the man everyone knew him to be. His mindset about life and people has changed drastically. He is aware that the choices he has made pulled him away from his family and have created hardships all around. Our son is a pre-teen and is at the age where he needs a male role model more than ever. We can't rely on the media or movie stars to teach our children to be outstanding citizens or humble human beings. Children needs parents, fathers and mothers who take ownership of their families and are leaders. I consider my husband to be a leader. Not for what he did years ago but for what he is doing now to change our family legacy. Gustavo knows the direction in which he wants to lead his family. I'm proud and confident that when my husband comes home, he will do so. He is ready for that responsibility and he has a strong woman running alongside who will help him take our family to the next level. I need Gustavo to be the father our son needs him to be. To be home now and teach him how to be responsible, caring, and help our son become an excellent man. Our son wants to do all these things dads and sons get to do, like ride dirt bikes or go camping and work on cars. Our son wants his dad to be home to help him on his science projects on help him work towards his goal at becoming an engineer. I need Gustavo to protect our little girl and to teach her how a young lady should be treated. She wants her daddy to teach her how to drive and go 4-wheeling. Our baby girl wants her dad to build her a tree house and take her to gymnastics. My husband will teach our kids self-respect and self-worth and love our kids endlessly. He does now but the kids need their dad here every morning and every night. Our kids don't want to put their emotions and needs on hold until dad can get in line to give them a call. If they have a problem, they should be able to go to dad and ask for help or just have someone to hold them and tell them everything is going to be alright. As a mother, my heart aches for my children because I know there is a void in their hearts that I can't fill like their dad can. It hurts so much to hear our kids ask when is Daddy going to come home? All I can say is soon. We talk a lot about the things we will do as a family and we hold onto that hope of knowing it will happen one day. All the adventures we will go on and life experiences we will have. I know when my husband comes home, he will take care of us. He will support us, no doubt in my mind. Gustavo has already proven to himself, me and our children that he will not go back on his word. Before my husband got on the wrong path, he was trying to do right for our son. He had graduated from OYCP, in Bend, Oregon. In hopes to in list in the military as a very young adult. The choices he made lead to another lifestyle and that opportunity he worked hard for was gone. Even though my husband has made bad choices in life, he hasn't allowed that to be an excuse for him to continue on the wrong path. Due to having a measure 11 crime, Gustavo isn't eligible for many programs, but he found ways to get around furthering his education and taking advantage of opportunities. He has joined a dad's group and reads a lot of self-help books and parenting books. We've read books like "Love and Respect" and "The 5 love languages of Children" to help better our marriage and relationships

with our children. During his time incarcerated, he obtained his GED, received his certification for 7 Habits of Highly Effective People, received his GOGI Education Course Completion Certificate, and AAA certificate. Gustavo is working towards getting transferred to OSP where he will continue his education and receive his certificate as an entry Level Technician. Gustavo isn't one to waste time. He will do all he can to stay productive and find a way to get ahead in life. He knows when he comes home there is a lot of work to put in for himself and our family. If my husband were to come home today, I know without a shadow of a doubt that he will never go back to prison. He will do right by our family. There is no other option for him. His word means everything to him. Those who know him know that he never goes back on a promise. His plans are to bring me home from my job within the first year of him being home so I can be a full-time mom to our children and future children. He plans to work in construction or as a mechanic and hopefully within the first few years of him being home, he plans to start his own contracting business. He is already working towards that and doing his research from afar so when he comes home, he will hit the ground running. I need him to come home now. Our children are a critical time in their life where they need their father. I always say, just because you had a child doesn't make you a mother or father. It is what you do to prove you deserve the recognition of being a parent. It is how you chose to serve your children and spouse. My husband deserves to be called a father. Our children are proud to have him as their dad and I know if they were to have their dad home with them today, it would be a game changer. Their lives will be turned upside down but in a positive way.

I ask that you please consider how changing Measure 11 will impact our family. My husband isn't perfect. I'm far from it. We all make mistakes, but it is what we do to rectify those mistakes. Gustavo has proven to himself, his friends and family that your mistakes don't define your future or who you are as a person. He is truly one of the good ones. He will do great things in 2021 and the years to come. I'm blessed enough to say that I can stand beside him and watch him accomplish everything he said he would and more. I look forward to the day I can bring my husband and the father of my children home.

Thank you again for taking the time to read my letter. I know time is invaluable and we all wish we could have more of it. Unfortunately, we can't, and we must make the most of the time we have now. This is something Gustavo will do. I guarantee it.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Noemi Vega Vasquez". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Noemi Vega-Vasquez