

June 3, 2024

The Honorable Greg Abbott
Governor of Texas
P.O. Box 12428
Austin, Texas 78711-2428

Texas Board of Pardons and Paroles
Clemency Section
8610 Shoal Creek Boulevard
Austin, TX 78757

Re: Ramiro Gonzales, scheduled for execution June 26, 2024

We are writing as Christians calling for you to spare the life of another Christian – Ramiro Gonzales. Ramiro has changed. Because he has changed, we believe the circumstances surrounding him should change as well.

We begin with the dignity of Ramiro Gonzales as an image bearer of God. We also are mindful of 1 Corinthians 12:26, which says, “If one member suffers, all suffer together.” Ramiro, despite his past actions, is part of the body of Christ. His execution, and his suffering with a date of death looming, is and will also be *our* suffering.

Because of all this we ask that you honor this Christian culture of life and grant clemency to Ramiro Gonzales.

Ramiro has come to exemplify a person’s ability to change. He was a few months past his 18th birthday, addicted to drugs, and acting out of a traumatized childhood when he ended a life and altered many others. His death sentence was based on his “future dangerousness,” yet, incredibly, after nearly two decades on death row, he is an entirely different person.

From Dr. Edward Gripon, we hear a public acknowledgement recanting his 2006 testimony on behalf of the State. Dr. Gripon no longer believes Ramiro to be a future danger and in fact says Ramiro is “now a significantly different person both mentally and emotionally.”

From Ramiro’s spiritual advisors, we hear that Ramiro “has an extraordinary ability to connect with others and move them in love.”

From death row prison guards, we hear Ramiro described as “sensitive,” “genuinely” changed, and someone they “feel safe around” and is “never problematic.”

From Ramiro himself, we hear him speak of “Love, mercy, grace, forgiveness. All these are acts of God. That’s what’s been so instrumental to my life.”

On January of this year, Ramiro was selected as a peer coordinator for a faith-based pod

on the Polunsky Unit, where he serves as a religious and spiritual leader to many.

Our prayers are with the family of Bridget Townsend, and we still hold that the answer to violence is not further violence. The cycle of violence can end here.

Again, we ask that you grant clemency to Ramiro, a wonderfully changed man, and allow him to live out his life serving others.

Thank you for your leadership.

In Christ,

Paul Basden, co-senior pastor, Preston Trail Community Church, Frisco, Texas

Jesse Rincones, J.D., Executive Director, Convención Bautista Hispana de Texas (Hispanic Baptist Convention of Texas), Lubbock, Texas

Tom Mooney, Bikers for Christ, Gladewater, Texas

Brianna Childs Davenport, Executive Pastor at Gather Houston, Houston, Texas

Stephen Reeves, Executive Director, Fellowship Southwest, Dripping Springs, TX

Aaron Griffith, author of *God's Law & Order*, professor at Whitworth University

Lisa Sharon Harper, author of *The Very Good Gospel*, founder/president of Freedom Road

Sam Heath, Equal Justice USA's Evangelical Network

Michelle Ferrigno Warren, President, Virago Strategies, professor, Denver Seminary and former advocacy & strategic engagement director at the Christian Community Development Association

Demetrius Minor, national manager, Conservatives Concerned about the Death Penalty

Fisher Humphreys, Professor of Divinity Emeritus, Samford University, Birmingham, Alabama