November, 2019

To:      Governor Kevin Stitt

2300 N Lincoln Blvd.

Oklahoma City, OK 73105

Re: Commutation of Tondalo Hall

Dear Governor Stitt:

I write to you on behalf of Tondalo Hall, a mother and domestic violence survivor who was given a 30 year prison sentence for failing to protect her children from her abuser. I am sure you have seen the news coverage of her case, and I write to you because you have the power to ensure she is back at home with her family and her faith community by Christmas.

Toni was just 19 years old when she was arrested for the injuries found on her two youngest children after she took them to the hospital. She was living with the children’s father and her boyfriend, Robert Braxton, at the time. She was the victim of Braxton’s verbal, physical, emotional, financial, and sexual abuse for years. Despite the significant barriers to leaving an abusive relationship, Toni had saved up by hiding several checks. She found a new house where she and her children could live without Braxton. Before they were able to leave, however, Toni found the worst thing a mother could find - that her children had been harmed. She took them to the hospital, against the instruction of Braxton, and learned about the severity of their injuries. That hospital visit led to her arrest.

While in jail pre-trial, Braxton continued to verbally abuse and threaten Toni with physical violence. The threats only worsened after she agreed to testify against him. During her testimony, the prosecutor began asking Toni about the abuse she faced from Braxton; however, she was cut short due to the prosecutor’s failure to notify defense counsel of her intention of introducing evidence of the abuse she endured. Braxton was given a plea deal of 10 years probation with time served. He never spent a day in prison. Toni signed a blind plea and was sentenced to 30 years in prison.

Fifteen years later, Tondalo Hall, ever resilient, submitted a commutation application, which was unanimously approved by the Pardon and Parole Board to time served on the grounds that the sentencing judge did not have information about the abuse Toni faced from Braxton. The foundation of domestic abuse is the abuser’s goal to maintain power and control over their victim. As the victim of Braxton’s abuse for years, Toni faced and overcame significant barriers to make sure her kids got the medical care they needed when she noticed the injuries. Toni and her kids have long paid for the abuse they suffered with separation, and you have the chance to bring them back together.

While in prison, Toni has created immense personal growth for herself. She has gone through counseling services and parenting classes, received her GED and cosmetology license, and become a friend and mentor to many other women also incarcerated for failing to stop the crimes of their abusers.

Today, the victims in Toni’s case, her two youngest children, are among her greatest advocates. Robert and Ukiah Hall appeared before the Pardon and Parole Board, asking the Board to reunite them with their mother. The Halls are ready to be a family again and hope to celebrate Christmas together for the first time in over a decade. I write you today, asking that you sign Tondalo Hall’s commutation and reunite a family too long torn apart by injustice. I ask that you join with Toni, the victims in her case, her family, her community of advocates, and the entire Pardon and Parole Board in supporting and signing Tondalo Hall’s commutation to, at long last, grant Toni her freedom.

Respectfully,