

Your Honor,

My name is Bailey Scott Smith. The defendant, George Thacker, is a dear friend of mine. I am writing this letter to give you more substance and information about him as you decide on what his punishment will be for the crime he has committed.

I've known George for about 25 years, we met in the late 1990s. I put together an area-wide crusade with several of the local churches. My father was an evangelist and I would recruit churches and handle all the business side with area-wide crusades. It was held at the football stadium in the late 1990s. I met George the week before the crusade started. After getting to know him and hearing him play his harmonica, I booked him to play at other events in the coming years.

George is an intelligent, funny, and kind man with a heart of gold. He is well-liked and respected by his friends and peers. He is generally very affable and goes out of his way to meet people. He regularly goes to an unreasonable amount of effort to try to help people. He was a foster child, I believe this is the reason he's highly relationally sensitive. He's been a respected member of the community for years as the county mayor.

I learned of George's legal situation over the phone. He was really upset and frightened about it. It was very frustrating because I felt he was being unnecessarily harsh on himself for making stupid decisions. I hoped there had been some kind of mistake. I told him to just pay it back and the problem would be fixed. He told me he wasn't allowed to do that. I felt he must have misunderstood something and got increasingly frustrated thinking he wasn't telling me the whole story. As time passed I realized it was more serious than I could have imagined it would be.

After I had time to process George's situation I told him I would try and help with his business if he was incarcerated. The hardship will be mostly felt by the people in his community. I've never known anyone who loved his community like George. If a storm came through, he'd be out at 3 in the morning cutting trees. He fought for emergency services and brought in business. The last time I was there, a lady pulled up and asked him for \$20 for gas to take her mom to the doctor. People

in that community have come to depend on George. He'd give people money almost daily. Every year he makes several trips to the store to make sure all the Toys for Tots locations are full of toys. It means a lot to him because he was a foster child. It has nothing to do with his job. You'll not be able to find someone who will drop everything and try to help people and be unafraid to speak up for the little guy for a salaried county job. He goes to everything and supports everything. The community will feel his absence. I don't think they realize most of the things he does aren't in his job description. His replacement probably won't be willing to work around the clock. Most of his recreation centered around his vocation. He lived alone and was committed to his community like most people are to their families.

Since his arrest, George has expressed his remorse and regret to me on many occasions. I've spent hours on the phone with him and several nights at his home with him weeping and wishing he'd have realized what he was doing and how wrong it was. He deeply feels shame and regret. I've witnessed him call friends and relatives and try to explain and apologize. He's given away a lot of his possessions to people and told them he loved them. I believe he has had a chance to truly reflect on his actions and sees that what he did was not only wrong but just plain foolish as well. He has taken responsibility for his actions and the impact it's and his reputation is a very hard lesson learned.

As you decide on George's legal punishment, I ask you to consider his importance to the community he continues to serve and his efforts to rebuild his life lawfully. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

Bailey Scott Smith