

[REDACTED]  
West Sacramento, CA 96691

Phone: [REDACTED]

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July 30, 2023

RE: [REDACTED] Request for Criminal Record Expungement

To whom it may concern:

This letter is written to support the request of [REDACTED] for expungement of her criminal record.

Allow me to begin by introducing myself and my relationship with [REDACTED]. I am [REDACTED]'s mother and like her, a member of the Hoopa Valley Tribe located in Humboldt County California. Born on the reservation, I and my family were raised steeped in our tribal culture and active in tribal ceremonies and politics. While we gained much from our unique circumstances, it did not immunize us from the intergenerational trauma reflected in dismal statistics common to poor, rural tribal communities. Influenced by my family's political activity and focus on education, I earned a law degree. While now retired, I spent decades practicing federal Indian law with California Indian Legal Services, then as general counsel for my tribe. I had the privilege of serving 7 years on the Judicial Council's Family and Juvenile Law Advisory Committee and ended my law career as a Tribal Consultant with the California Department of Social Services, focusing on implementation of the federal Indian Child Welfare Act and improving state/tribal relations.

I have been privileged to enjoy access to emerging practices relating to trauma, violence, and addiction that have given me an appreciation for the influences that have impacted my life, and [REDACTED]'s as well. [REDACTED] was a beautiful and talented child, she was athletic and very musical, singing in choir and mastering the violin at an early age. The family competed in fiddle contests and eventually joined a band that performed at charity events. When the teen years arrived, so did rebellion and her first involvement with alcohol and drugs. [REDACTED] became a teenage mother, married young and moved to Redding. With alcohol and drugs present in her life her difficulties with the law reach back to this period. Notwithstanding, she finished high school and completed several courses at the local junior college. After a few years her first marriage ended, and she returned to Humboldt. She remarried and went on to earn a degree from Cal Poly Humboldt. She worked at Cal Poly Humboldt for several years as the administrative assistant in the Center for Indian Community Development. With excellent organizational and people skills she distinguished herself as an event organizer. During this time, she assisted the Table Bluff Wiyot Tribe as a cultural specialist in organizing and preparing for the revival of traditional World Renewal ceremonies. She also served as a cultural resource for local TANF programs, and she provided respite care for more than one young boy experiencing family issues.

These activities were interrupted by issues with her neck that eventually required surgery. Around this same time, she and her husband experienced escalating involvement with drugs and domestic violence. Their associations changed and their behavior spiraled downward in a heartbreaking pattern I suspect is not uncommon for methamphetamine addiction. Her employment with the college ended. With minor children in the home, my husband and I spent years doing everything we could to secure services for her and to remove her children from what became an unsafe environment. Because of family resources available to her, agencies were unresponsive. Our only recourse was to cease all support and interventions and report any and every concern. It took several years before her younger two children were removed and placed in foster care with us in West Sacramento. ██████'s downward spiral, with arrests in several northern California counties, continued until she was arrested in Sacramento County. In all prior incidents, she was basically arrested and released. Sacramento detained her and she got a taste of what prison is like. This was her new beginning.

██████ opted to enter a drug rehabilitation program in lieu of jail time. She worked diligently with the various counties where she had outstanding charges to resolve them through her time in these programs. Because her children were placed in the Sacramento area, she stayed in the area and was able and willing to take advantage of services and opportunities here that simply are not available in rural areas. She took her recovery very seriously and she did it on her own. We did not provide a place to stay, transportation, or money. Rather, she identified resources, like transit passes, and spent hours diligently traveling to appointments and meetings. She successfully completed every program available to her. She also ended her marriage and focused on her recovery and her children. After two years in foster care, she was reunified with her children and has lived in West Sacramento with assistance from the Bringing Families Home Program. She has been clean and sober for over four years. Her highest priority is her recovery. She regularly attends AA meetings, serves as a sponsor, maintains a relationship with her own sponsor, and serves as a representative on various regional AA positions. During the pandemic shutdown she used her considerable skills to facilitate AA Zoom meetings, resulting in a "home group" with participants from throughout the country.

██████ is a wonderful advocate for her children. When her son encountered problems at school, she pursued a disability designation to access needed accommodations. When denied, she appealed and succeeded in securing independent assessments and ultimately, winning an IEP to accommodate his needs. She regularly attends sports and school functions and, even though on a limited income, budgeted to allow her daughter to travel to New York and Washington D.C. for her 8<sup>th</sup> grade trip earlier this summer. The family continues to deal with the aftermath of a traumatic period but receives regular medical and mental health care. They have reconnected with their tribal cultural traditions and with native events and activities in the Sacramento area. Just earlier this month, we traveled to the Hoopa Reservation where our tribal community joined us for Leslie's daughter Winter's Flower Dance, a multi-day coming of age ceremony. Suffice it to say, it is a major undertaking and ██████ did an incredible job organizing and working to complete a host of challenging tasks required to make



this type of event happen. For my part, I was gratified to see [REDACTED] fully reunited with and integrated into her ceremonial dance community. It was a large, loving and joyous occasion.

Encouraged by professionals at various AA events, [REDACTED] is studying to obtain a license as a certified drug and alcohol counselor. With her skills, abilities, and experience I have no doubt she will be an asset to this profession. Please support her and those she will be able to assist in the future by expunging her criminal record to the fullest extent possible.

Sincerely,

A large black rectangular redaction box covering the signature area.