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August 5, 2016

Governor Rick Snyder  
PO Box 30013  
Lansing, Michigan 48909

**RE: Karen Kantzler**

Dear Governor Snyder:

I write this letter in support of granting clemency to Karen Kantzler who was convicted of 2<sup>nd</sup> Degree Murder of her husband on February 22, 1988 and given a life sentence on the second degree murder and two years mandatory felony firearm by the Hon. Norman L. Lippitt (Retired) of the Oakland County Circuit Court.

I am the successor to Judge Lippitt and on September 15, 1993, I overturned her conviction based on the following:

- A. Miss Kantzler was abused throughout her life, including her marriage.
- B. She was a victim of battered spouse syndrome.
- C. Had her counsel been more effective and pursued those avenues available to him, the likelihood of a conviction and/or a life sentence would be greatly reduced.
- D. The sentence of the judge was not what he intended. In fact, he intended a much lighter sentence. Had he still been on the bench, it is my opinion, that he would have reversed himself.
- E. The psychological report indicates that Miss Kantzler was not harmful today to society.

The fact that the Parole Board has not granted her parole, in spite of the overwhelming evidence to the contrary, is a travesty.

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The Parole Board has instituted a mandatory first degree murder sentence on what was a second degree conviction, notwithstanding the sentencing judge being outspoken of his desire to give a lighter sentence.

Ms. Kantzler possesses no threat to society, and notwithstanding the appellate court decision, should have been resentenced and set free.

It is my professional opinion as a Circuit Judge, including my appointment as Chief Judge in Oakland County, President of the Michigan Judges Association and a recipient of the Champion of Justice Award from the State Bar of Michigan, that her continued incarceration is in itself a crime and an affront to justice and without any legal basis by the Parole Board to support their decision, other than an outdated and political basis of being "tough on crime."

Karen Kantzler's continued incarceration serves no purpose other than to appeal to an outdated, cruel and unusual punishment that has nothing to do with justice and law.

Yours very truly,

Barry L. Howard



BLH:daf

cc: Carol Jacobsen, Professor  
The University of Michigan

cc: Alan Ackerman