

MindFreedom International

454 Willamette, Suite 216

Eugene, OR 97440

541-345-9106

www.mindfreedom.org

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Dear Governor Inslee:

My name is Ronald Bassman. I am the Executive Director of MindFreedom International (MFI). Our non-profit organization challenges the overly simplistic notion that a diagnosis of mental illness or disability justifies the incarceration of people in psychiatric hospitals, nursing homes, and other congregate living centers where they are segregated from the community at large.

I write to you on behalf of Siddharta Fisher who is incarcerated unnecessarily and awaiting discharge at Washington State Hospital. At a time of COVID, when congregate living spaces are clearly life threatening, it is inconceivable for a young African American man to be confined when there is no indication of his attaining any benefit, nor is there a threat to the community. I cannot help but wonder why his discharge continues to be delayed. I can only imagine the pain his mother feels from witnessing her son being deprived of his freedom.

We at MFI implore you to investigate this egregious transgression of social justice. Siddharta is one of many who experience psychosocial problems, and instead of receiving assistance, are confined and over medicated into becoming life-long "mental patients." It need not be this way. Each life is precious, and we know that all will benefit when there is the opportunity and encouragement to pursue the development of their unique innate potential.

Helping Siddharta will do more than helping just one person. It can be a model for helping others, for them to not give up in the pursuit of their dreams.

I recognize the many demands made on you as governor and ask you to consider a guiding principle from the Hebrew Talmud. *To save one person is to save the world.* Please help.

Respectfully,
Ronald Bassman PhD