

Tuesday, June 14, 2016

The Honorable Nikki R. Haley
Office of the Governor
1205 Pendleton Street
Columbia, South Carolina 29201

Re: **Rehabilitation not Incarceration**

Dear Governor Haley:

This letter is on the behalf of my 27 year old Grandson, Johnathan Glenn Savage. He has a long record of mostly drug related crimes. He is presently charged in Laurens County, South Carolina for selling a controlled drug to a Town of Clinton Police Officer and a \$40,000 Bond was set.

I would like to tell you about John and his life. Some of the details are:

- **He was born in the Self Memorial Hospital in Greenwood, S.C. by an emergency Cesarean Section because of fetal distress.** His Mother, Rose Magaha, was sent back to her home to Clinton because it was determined by her Gynecologist that she was in false labor and no fetal monitoring was done so he had no fetal monitoring during labor until she returned later to Self Memorial Hospital where she was immediately taken to surgery for an emergency Cesarean Section. Johnathon had breathing problems, lost weight in utero, and remained hospitalized for some time after his mother was discharged. He was about two weeks overdue and the umbilical cord was in a stage of deterioration and not properly functioning. **John now has numerous signs and symptoms of undiagnosed Cerebral Palsy. His speech is slow and often slurred and he has many neuromuscular problems. He also has neurological disorders.**
- John has back and leg pain as might be seen as a symptom of Cerebral Palsy. His right leg is shorter than his left leg and he has an abnormal gait.
- He is a very polite man; he constantly staggers with his abnormal gate and apologizes to everyone as he passes for example through an isle in a restaurant.
- I have seen him fall hard to the ground several times. The last fall with me was when we were in the parking lot of a Mexican Restaurant in Greenwood, SC where he slammed down onto the cement parking lot. He will actually take a hard fall to the ground by stumbling over his own feet even when he is not high.

- He has spoken to me about how he was bullied in high school. He dropped out when he was 16 years old; but earned a GED shortly afterwards when he was in juvenile detention in Bennettsville, SC.
- The detention was for driving without a driver's license. At that time he was represented by William Mayer, Attorney at Law. Mr. Mayer worked for a plea bargain for me to take custody of John and bring him with me to Charlotte where I live. The Laurens County Officers were in agreement with Mr. Mayer, but the Presiding Judge disagreed and sentenced him to the detention. At that time I was consulting to Area Behavioral Health Centers in N.C. The centers were from the Smoky Mountains to Roanoke Rapids in the northwestern part of the state and I was healthy and financially able to provide him counseling, healthcare, and stability. Since that time, beginning in 2011, I am fighting a very aggressive inflammatory, stage 3 breast cancer and a severe and painful weakness in my right leg. For these and other reasons I am no longer financially or physically able to take on the challenges Johnathon is facing without help. My deceased husband also spent seven years in the North Carolina Veterans Nursing Home during this time which was very costly.
- After many tries, John has never located a reliable job and lives in pain and abject poverty less than 4 blocks from the police office. He has no car or driver's license so he is well known by the police officers in the neighborhood.
- He has had no medical care since his Medicaid terminated at 18 with the exception of the local hospital emergency department. These visits were for dental infections and they gave him prescriptions for antibiotics which he cannot afford and **told him to see a dentist or he is going to die of sepsis, an infection that spreads through the bloodstream which causes organ failure and death. He has one front tooth only. All the other teeth in his mouth have broken away to the jaw line.**
- I can and I have promised John to drive him where he needs to go in order to obtain assistance – we began by attempting to enroll in Obama Care (The Affordable Care Act) which was an expense that we could not afford and we were referred to social services to apply for disability. I have driven from Charlotte to Clinton and from there with John for numerous scheduled visits in Laurens, Greenville, and Greenwood for legal, mental and physical evaluations. We were told at his last visit to the Lawyer's office that he had been denied all appeals and will be scheduled for a Final Disability Hearing and it would be a year before that would happen – he does not have a year. He is represented by the McCravy, Newton, and Sturkie Law Firm P.A. in Greenwood, S.C.

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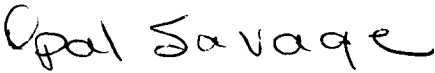
- **John has a documented medical history of ADHD and was treated with prescription medications as long as he was on Medicaid. His father also has a diagnosis of ADHD and is effectively treated with medications at this time. ADHD is a hereditary neurological disease – no prison will make it better. In addition to ADHD John is Bipolar – this disorder causes emotion swings from depression to mania. ADHD and Bipolar Disorder are frequently together. The disability evaluations only addressed the depression to my knowledge, but he clearly described his Bipolar disorder in his own words in his disability application.**

I am begging for your assistance since all options available for him are expensive to South Carolina, with me driving him for his required, lifesaving medical care it will be much less expensive than going through the prison system and I know the medical and rehabilitation process well. **He must not be allowed to die in prison.** I pray that the best future option for him and South Carolina will prevail. I see no benefit for him or the state to automatically deny him the medical benefits which could lead to him becoming a productive and law abiding citizen. It is well documented that the neurological disease of ADHD leads to alcoholism and drug dependence.

Thank you in advance for reviewing, evaluating, and responding to my letter. **The best possible outcome would be for him is to receive appropriate medical care and job training – he is interested in technology and has computer skills.** I promise to stand by him through the process to maximize the resources that come with a Disability Determination.

Please call, write or e-mail me with any questions you may have. I am his Grandmother and he has given me the right to represent him through the Affordable Care Act. His address is 603 Musgrove St. in Clinton, SC 29325.

Respectfully,


Opal E. Savage, RN, BSN, ARM

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