

Letters in Support (Additional Letters for Leo Kelly)

Good afternoon,

I am writing this letter on behalf of my friend Leo Kelly. I know you have probably read a lot of letters and have had many reach out on behalf of loved ones, so I will try to keep it brief.

I met Leo for the first time about 2.5 years ago when he walked into my church. Naturally, I am very skeptical of strangers, and truthfully I do not usually trust people who I do not know deeply. Therefore, when I first met Leo, I welcomed him but didn't know anything about him. A few weeks later, I see his face appear on a news article explaining what had happened on January 6<sup>th</sup>. I also am not someone super passionate about politics. Therefore, here is this man and stranger who entered into my church of whom I am already skeptical, and now he is on the news. My first impression is that I do not want this man around me and my loves ones. May I freely assume, the jury and many of those in the court room, also got to know Leo based off this first impression.

However, something the jury has not been able to share with me, that I wish they were, was the way I have gotten to know this man over the last 2.5 years. The first impression I once had of him has been swallowed up by a man that I now know is humble, hard working, funny, caring, sacrificial and loving. He has become one of my best friends, more like a brother. He has become like an uncle to my son who just turned 2 years old. I have seen Leo's tender heart and nurturing side in the way he interacts with my child. I have seen him go out of his way to bring others to church, without any complaints. I have seen him drive hours and hours of distance to help serve other people, even though he will never get any credit. I have seen a man who wants nothing more in this life than to be loved by God and have family.

Again, I know you probably receive many letters like this but in humility may I freely wonder what the dream and passion was that brought you into your current position as a judge? I don't want to assume I know anything about you, but I am guessing in one way or the other, you saw all the evil in the world and you wanted to do your part to make things right. You wanted to bring justice to a world that is filled with suffering and evil. To that I say amen. I am not trying to be controversial, but I think the same heart that made you want to be a judge, is the same heart that Leo carried into Jan 6. Leo saw the evil happening in this nation and wanted to do something about it. The difference is that his solution was misdirected and he tried to solve a spiritual problem with a political solution which obviously was the wrong decision. In a moment of high emotion, crowd intensity and passion; he found himself in a place where he shouldn't have been and has been paying the consequences for it ever since.

There is a verse in the Bible that says, "mercy triumphs over judgement." Judge, I do not ask that you overlook the laws Leo broke, and I do not ask that you take it lightly. But what I do beg and plead is that you would have mercy. Mercy is not overlooking the wrong, but believing that the mercy would have the possibility of having a better outcome on the community as a whole than judgment. Putting Leo behind bars is not going to leave him or the community off any better. I believe having Leo in our midst, is a benefit to the nation. I believe putting Leo behind bars would be punishment that causes more harm than the harm he **personally** caused on Jan 6. He has had to face consequences the last two years for his decisions. The inability to truly plan and dream his days ahead as this loomed. People seeing him on the news and it impacting his business. I do not ask that there be no punishment, but I only ask that you would consider having mercy, and allow him to remain free and not behind bars. The purpose of prison/jail is to rehabilitate people who have a chance to change and be productive in society, and to keep those who only cause harm away from society. I believe Leo is no harm to society, and has learned from his mistake. He has already been so good to those he comes into contact with ever since this mistake.

Please grant this mercy. "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy. I hope everything I said was received as coming from a pure heart and none of it as naïve or disrespectful in nature. Thank you for all you do and your service as a judge.

-Austin, North Liberty, IA

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My name is Briana, and I am a 26-year-old female living in North Liberty, IA. I met Leo Kelly at our Church in 2020, and since then, Leo has become my friend and brother. Leo is one of the kindest, most thoughtful, and most consistent men I know. I grew up in a home with an abusive father who later ended up in prison for selling drugs when I was 4. My father going to jail saved us from any further harm. Alcoholism ran in my family, and there was not a man I felt safe with. During my junior year of high school, I began dating a man that later abused me for eight months as we went to college together, which put me in a state of hopelessness. Because of this, my walls towards men were as thick as they could get. I have been fearful of men since a young child. I share this because only a few men have allowed me to feel safe in their presence, and Leo Kelly is one of them. I have never feared for my safety with Leo. He has never spoken to me out of anger or frustration. He always championed me to seek edification. He has always been a consistent source of joy and peace. Leo has always been someone I could count on. Not only is this world and the lives of many better with Leo in it, but my life is. To send Leo to jail would be to take a man that improves the quality of life for others away. He is always the first to offer a helping hand and is one of the most reliable people I know. When I wanted to pursue a way to make an income creatively, he offered me a job at his family's company doing website development. I had no experience developing websites, but Leo believed in me more than I believed in myself. That is the kind of man that Leo has been in my life. Leo has brought comfort and a sense of safety to my life. He has been a helping hand, and has shown me that not all men are to be feared. Leo has challenged me to develop new skills, and he has shown me how to live a life of peace amid deep turmoil with the way he has carried himself with grace and humility throughout this whole time of waiting for this trial and sentencing. As I shared earlier, my father going to jail saved my mother, sister, and me from any further harm. Leo going to jail would be the complete opposite. He enhances the lives of so many, and it would be unfortunate not to be able to do life alongside him. I hope this letter allows you to see Leo for who he is: a kind, gentle and loving man who makes this world better when he is in it.

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To Whom It May Concern

I am writing on behalf of Leo Kelly who has been charged in the January 6 protests.

Leo is an upstanding citizen and part of a whole family of young men and women who work together, worship together and spend time together as a family.

I am acquainted with Leo through his mother, Brenda. At her invitation I attended a series of Constitutional Citizenship classes in which Leo had a leadership position. I was very impressed with Leo's knowledge of the Constitution of the USA, as well as the way he interacted with the many people who attended these classes.

I believe our community, as well as Leo, would be better off if he is freed from any wrongdoing.

Sincerely

Helen  
Marion, Iowa