

# THE FLORIDA CAPITOL ADVOCATE GROUP

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**August 31, 2006**

**To whom it may concern:**

I am pleased to write a letter of high recommendation and assessment of character on behalf of Charles "Charlie" Norman. I do so fully understanding his current incarceration and the fact that this communication may be submitted in support of his early release and in the process may become a public record. I have no reservations about publicly declaring my support on behalf of Charlie. I also want to establish at the outset that, while I do represent people and entities before state agencies for remuneration, I am not doing so in this case. I am appearing as a supporting friend and not as a retained advocate.

It was about twenty or more years ago that I met Charlie when I was a guest speaker at the Zephyrhills correction facility. I have visited with him on several occasions since and have communicated with him regularly over the years.

Charlie is incarcerated for a very serious crime, but one that I am not sure he committed. He might be guilty of a lesser offense, but not the one he was found guilty of. However, the jury found him guilty and he was sentenced, so under the law his guilt is not the issue.

What is the issue is what he deserves nearly twenty five years after the fact. I believe that Charlie should be returned to society as a free man and let me tell you why.

However, let me first establish my credentials to speak on this subject. I am a former hard charging Assistant State Attorney who prosecuted capital cases and sent two defendants to death row. I am a first class law and order and pro prosecution person.

Later in my career, I served for twenty one years in the Florida Legislature, where I served on both the House and Senate criminal justice committees and chaired the Senate Criminal Justice Committee for three years, during which time we substantially re-wrote and revised Florida's criminal justice statutes.

Based on my years of experience, I rarely believe that someone should be let out of prison before serving their full sentence, but Charles Norman is an exception.

I first met Charlie when I went to speak at the Zephyrhills facility. We have stayed in close contact for now nearly a quarter of a century. I have watched him improve himself and work to improve others similarly situated. He has become an accomplished writer and artist and has helped others learn how to read. He has helped to maintain peace and inspiration at every facility where he has been housed as a part of participating in the resident chapel program.

His conduct has been exemplary and his rehabilitation has been significant. It is now time for Charlie to get on with his life and to carry out the good he wants to do for society. He poses no risk for society. I would be honored to pick up upon his release and provide housing for him in my home the first night of his freedom.

In addition to writing this letter, I intend to travel to Tallahassee, or wherever his hearing might be held to speak on his behalf.

Thank you for considering this perspective and I trust that the result of his petition will be a favorable outcome.

Most cordially yours,



**John Grant**  
**Florida State Senator (Ret.)**