

Motion to Set Aside Character Reference Letter Guidelines

Hello Judge:

Introduction to the letter. Saying hello to the Judge and the reason for the letter.

"Dear Judge / Your Honor:"

"I hope this letter finds you well. I am writing on behalf of _____ and his/her request to set aside his/her conviction."

I Want You to Know, Judge:

Tell the Judge what you want the Judge to know about the person writing this letter. Examples can be about the person's qualities that you admire or respect.

" _____ is a kind and caring person who has respect for the law.

" _____ is working hard to make sure this never happens again."

" _____ has explained to me how much this experience impacted him/her."

How I Know, Judge:

Tell the Judge how you came to know what you wrote previously. What experience have you had with the person for whom you are writing this letter? How do you know this person? The Court will find your letter more impactful if you can establish your relationship with the person.

"I know this about _____ because I have spent time with him/her in a treatment and recovery center. During our time together, I have seen him/her....."

"...Involved in heartfelt conversations about their recovery."

"...Share their passion for moving forward with their life."

"...Fueled by optimism for their future."

Got to go, Judge:

Closing paragraph to the Judge, saying thank you, restating what you are writing in support of the court doing and providing contact information.

"Thank you, your Honor, for taking the time to read my letter and take it into consideration in granting _____'s motion to set aside his/her conviction."

"If there is anything further I can contribute, please feel free to contact me at _____."

"Thank you / Signed."

Other Tips: Do NOT bad mouth the court, the law, or the justice system. Do not ask the court for impossible things (like dismissing the charges). Do not bring up any social problems or talk negatively about the person ("he did this because he is an alcoholic or drug addict").