**Abs: Ort, Datum:**

**An:**Botschaft der Vereinigten Staaten von Amerika
I.E. Frau Amy Gutmann
Clayallee 170
14195 Berlin

Dear Governor Parson

Michael Tisius is due to be executed on 6 June. The crime of which he was convicted – the murder of two guards in Randolph County Jail on 22 June 2000 – was undoubtedly serious. I do not seek to downplay the suffering caused, but I do wish to appeal to you to stop this execution.

As a 19-year-old held in jail on a misdemeanour charge, Michael Tisius shared a cell with an older man, who initiated a plan to have the teenager, after his release, facilitate the man’s escape. The plan did not involve shooting anyone, but the man’s girlfriend stole a gun and gave it to Michael Tisius to intimidate the guards. It was during a botched enactment of this plan that the two guards were shot and killed.

Experts have concluded that the effects of Michael Tisius’s traumatic childhood and adolescence left him especially open to being "groomed" for the crime.

Four decades ago, in a capital case, the US Supreme Court stated that "youth is more than a chronological fact. It is a time and condition of life when a person may be most susceptible to influence and psychological damage". In 2005, banning the death penalty for people under 18 at the time of the crime, in recognition of their immaturity and vulnerability to negative influences, the Court noted that such qualities "do not disappear when an individual turns 18". Although Michael Tisius’s resentencing lawyers presented some evidence about the neglect and abuse that marked his childhood, subsequent assessments conducted at the request of the appeal lawyers by a childhood trauma expert, a neuropsychiatrist, and a neuropsychologist, as well as a prison expert, provide a far more cohesive and compelling picture of his psychological and emotional state, and how this impacted his judgment and decision-making.

In contrast to the prosecution’s assertion to the jury that the defendant’s future dangerousness made a death sentence "necessary", a psychiatrist who has evaluated Michael Tisius over the last two decades has said that his evaluations "demonstrate the opposite of any antisocial conduct", and that he "has made a successful transition to nonviolent living" in prison. A prison expert with decades of experience in prison management has concluded after his comprehensive review of Michael Tisius’s jail and prison records that he has displayed no violent conduct while in confinement and can be managed safely in prison.

**I urge you to grant Michael Tisius clemency and to commute his death sentence.**

Yours sincerely,