* Purpose of letter:
  + Offer your thoughts, knowledge, insights on your loved one to the Board.
  + Provide a counternarrative to the file the Board otherwise sees. Letters of support give the Parole Board insight into who your loved one is, beyond the picture that emerges through DOC and trial records. The letters provide an opportunity to bring the voices of community members and loved ones into the parole review process.
  + Provide an opportunity for you to detail any resources or support you’ll be able to provide to your loved one when he gets home.
* Suggestions for details to include in a Letter of Support:
  + State your name, age, occupation, and your relationship to your loved one
  + Include the length of time you have known your loved one
    - You can include details about your loved one before they went to prison, including offering insight on the challenges your loved one faced when they were young. However, if you discuss challenges your loved one faced when they were young, it’s helpful to also show how they are better prepared to cope with those challenges now.
  + Talk about how often you are in contact. Do you visit your loved one? Speak to them on the phone? Write letters to them?
  + Describe your loved one’s qualities and characteristics.
    - In your experience, who is your loved one? What makes them unique?
    - Why do you feel your loved one is a strong candidate for release?
    - Discuss any of their accomplishments in prison that you know about (e.g., drug and alcohol programs, educational achievements, involvement with community groups and/or efforts, peer support and mentorship)
  + Discuss your loved one’s transformation while in prison. What kind of person is your loved one now? What are their goals and motivations? Why/how do you know your loved one is safe to return home?
    - If your loved one has ever expressed general feelings of remorse to you about the crime, it would be helpful to include details of this.
  + Discuss any contributions or support you may be able to offer your loved one when they get home
    - * E.g. housing, job referral/connections, financial support, clothing, transportation, emotional support/advice/encouragement
  + *In your own words*, express your belief that, despite your loved one’s mistakes, they are ultimately a strong and special person, someone who does not pose a risk to public safety, a person who has matured and now promotes peace!
  + Sign and date the letter (include your full name)! Include phone number or some kind of contact info where the Board can reach you.
* Suggestions on how to write the letter:
  + Include specific anecdotes/stories about your loved one that reflect who they are. If possible, *show* (rather than tell)us who your loved one is through describing your interactions, conversations, and experiences with your loved one.
  + Focus on your loved one’s strengths, capabilities, and potential.