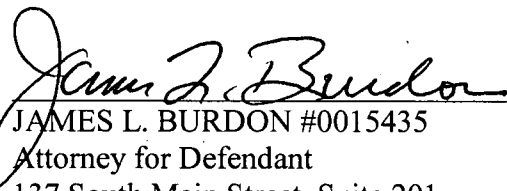


2015 APR 17 AM 7:33  
SUMMIT COUNTY  
CLERK OF COURTS

IN THE COURT OF COMMON PLEAS  
SUMMIT COUNTY, OHIO

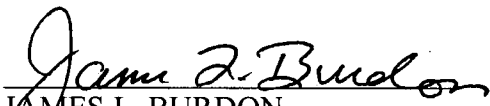
STATE OF OHIO	*	CASE NO. CR 2014 09 2712
Plaintiff	*	
-vs-	*	JUDGE RICHARD REINBOLD
STEVEN BITTEL	*	
Defendant	*	<u>DEFENDANT'S SENTENCING</u>
	*	<u>MEMORANDUM</u>

Now comes Defendant, STEVEN BITTEL, and submits twenty-seven (27) letters of character from members of St. Barnabas Church, personal friends, professional associates and relatives to assist the Court in its sentencing determination now scheduled for Wednesday, April 22, 2015, at 11:00 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
  
JAMES L. BURDON #0015435  
Attorney for Defendant  
137 South Main Street, Suite 201  
Akron, Ohio 44308  
330-253-7171 - 330-253-7174 fax  
burdon-merlitti@neo.rr.com

PROOF OF SERVICE

I hereby certify that a copy of the foregoing was delivered via the Summit County Clerk of Court's Office, this 15th day of April, 2015, to the Summit County Prosecutor's Office, 53 University Avenue, Akron, Ohio 44308.

  
JAMES L. BURDON  
Attorney for Defendant

***St. Barnabas Catholic Parish***  
*A people called to proclaim The Good News*



13 April 2015

The Honorable Richard Reinbold  
c/o Jim Burdon – Bittel defense  
137 South Main Street, Suite 201  
The Delaware Building  
Akron, Ohio 44308

Your Honor:

I am Fr. Ralph E. Wiatrowski, a Catholic Priest of forty years and Pastor of St. Barnabas Parish in Northfield, Ohio since August of 2007. My address is 9451 Brandywine Road, Northfield, OH 44067 and my telephone number is 440-467-0654 and cell: 216-406-2868. I am the Pastor of the Parish that Steve and his wife, Patty, attend. I have known Steve since shortly after I arrived here in 2007.

Steve had been involved as a member of the Finance Commission of St. Barnabas for many years before I arrived here, and was invaluable to me along with the other members of the commission in my transition, coming here to a large and vibrant parish from my previous 31 years of serving in administrative posts in the Chancery of the Diocese of Cleveland, and being in residence at St. Luke Parish in Lakewood, Ohio.

My impression of Steve is that he is a very talented man who is extremely generous in sharing his talents. His financial expertise was a great assistance to us in developing a realistic parish and school budget, in trying to keep tuitions at a reasonable rate, and in paying off the parish debt several years before it was due, in a way that saved the parish a huge amount in interest payments.

Steve was a Lector and Eucharistic Minister and was always very regular and consistent in his participation in church activities. When we began a "children's liturgy of the Word" a few years ago, in which youngsters younger than first Communion age are invited to attend a 15 -20 minute session during Mass, Steve and Patty volunteered to help out and became one of the most popular couples involved in this ministry.

Steve was also very helpful to some of the elderly in the parish. I know of one couple who had developed some mobility problems and for whom e-mail had become a life-line to stay connected with family and friends. Whenever they needed help or ran into a problem, Steve was always the first to volunteer and get them "online" once again, and this was always at his own expense.

Steve ran our parish festival for about five years and gave huge amounts of time to that project. Because of his talents in many areas he often filled in wherever was needed, anywhere from set up and

electrical work to the most menial tasks of clean up, all of this while overseeing the collection and counting of the proceeds with a sizable crew. From the planning and ordering of materials needed to the obtaining of appropriate permits, to the actual set-up and monitoring of the festival, Steve was involved in all aspects of the work involved.

Steve also taught in the Parish School of Religion (young people's religious education) and in the last few years offered a "lifestyles" class to the eighth grade students in finances and banking. This was very well received and looked forward to by many students.

In the midst of all this, while Steve is a man of very strong opinions, there was never the hint of any impropriety or any problem.

I would ask the court for any leniency that could be shown to Mr. Bittel. I think the experience he has had has caused him to learn a great deal about himself, and he is intent to put that to good use. While I do believe that any incarceration time he may be sentenced to he would be able to turn to great benefit to himself and to the others he may be with, I do not think that incarceration would serve any good purpose.

Steve is a good man, though admittedly he has some flaws. In his case, I think his lesson has been well learned and incarceration would not be warranted.

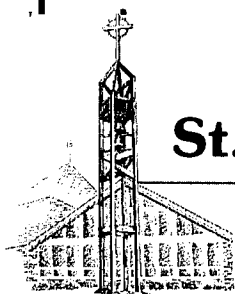
I will certainly keep the honorable Judge in my prayers, as well as Mr. Bittel, that whatever decision is made and whatever sentence given will be for the greater good.

Sincerely in Christ,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Ralph E. Wiatrowski". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name and title.

Fr. Ralph E. Wiatrowski

Pastor



## St. Barnabas Parish Family

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9451 Brandywine Road Northfield, Ohio 44067  
330-467-7959 fax 330-467-6424 [www.stbarnabasfamily.org](http://www.stbarnabasfamily.org)

April 7, 2015

Dear Judge Reinbold,

I am aware that you are sentencing Mr. Steve Bittel in your courtroom on April 22, 2015. I am the Parish Catechetical Leader at St. Barnabas Church and have known Mr. Bittel in that capacity for thirteen years. Steve was a parish leader and very active in ministry. For the past seven years he has been involved in ministries that serve children from preschool through junior high age. Never in that time have I had any concerns about his appropriateness with children nor had any complaints from parents, other adults who ministered with him, or children. Even after his arrest, no one has come forward. I hope you will consider this information as you determine sentencing. Thanks for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Toni Zobel". The ink is dark and the signature is fluid and legible.

Mrs. Toni Zobel  
Parish Catechetical Leader  
330-467-7601 x1

Home address:  
512 Blue Jay Tr.  
Macedonia, Ohio 44056  
330-467-6009

April 12, 2015

The Most Honorable Judge Richard Reinbold  
Summit County Court  
Akron, Ohio

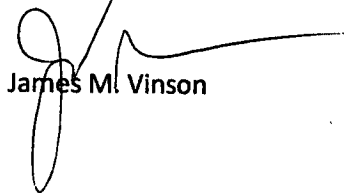
Re: Steve Bittel

Dear Judge Reinbold,

My name is James M. Vinson and I reside at 7360 Holzauer Rd. Sagamore Hills, OH 44067. I am writing you on behalf of Steve Bittel who will be coming before your court for sentencing this month. I have known Steve Bittel for the past twenty years. Steve and I met at St. Barnabas Catholic Church and we have served on the Parish Finance Council. I always admired Steve's love of his faith and dedication to serving the St. Barnabas Parish Family. He not only served on Finance Council but organized and chaired the annual Parish Festival. He gave countless hours of his time and always put the Parish ahead of his own interests. As Catholics we believe in Stewardship which includes "time", "talent", and "treasure". Steve used his talents in finance and accounting to help the parish financially. His love of our Lord and his Catholic faith were exhibited in the following parish ministries where he again gave countless hours of his time and talents. Steve was a lector, Eucharistic Minister, and PSR teacher. I can honestly say that I do not know any other parishioner who gave so much of his time to serving the St. Barnabas Parish Family on a volunteer basis. Steve is a very generous person and his generosity is always appreciated.

I respectfully ask that you take into account all of the good things that Steve has done when considering his sentence. His love of our Lord and dedication to the St. Barnabas Parish Family are areas that have impacted me along with the entire St. Barnabas Parish Family. If you have any questions, I can be reached at 216-233-3406.

Sincerely,



James M. Vinson

COPY

James E. Virost  
619 Carlin Road  
Sagamore Hills, Ohio 44067  
Telephone: 330-467-9496

April 13, 2015

To: Judge Richard Reinbold

Sir:

I have known Steve Bittel for the past 5-6 years as we both belong to St. Barnabas Parish and have been elected to the Nordonia Hills City Schools Board of Education.

Mr. Bittel and I were elected to the Nordonia Hills City School Board in November, 2011 for a four year term beginning January 1, 2012 to December 2015. During the time that I have known Mr. Bittel and during the time of his election to the school board, I was not aware of any inappropriate or illegal behavior on his part. To the best of my knowledge and subsequent to his resignation, I am not aware of any reports or allegations that Mr. Bittel behaved inappropriately.

In addition, I did observe that Mr. Bittel worked diligently on behalf of the students of the district and even donated his annual salary to help fund an outdoor classroom.

Very truly yours,

  
James E. Virost

COPY

April 12, 2015

Nancy Zajac  
244 Lowrie Blvd  
Northfield, OH 44067  
H 330-467-3204  
C 216-287-8832

Judge Richard Reinhold  
Summit County Courthouse

Dear Judge Reinhold,

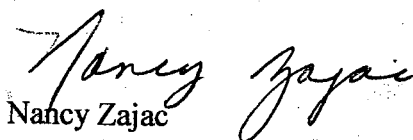
I am Nancy Zajac and for many years I have been involved with the Junior High Parish School of Religion at St. Barnabas Church where I came to know Steve. The program is designed for the students to be in a small group with a Catechist or Leader for much of the time but there is also large group activities and church services. We are all in the gym so we are separate and at the same time together. When I first meet Steve we were sharing leadership of a small group. We both went on to have our own small group. I eventually went on to coordinate the program and Steve continued on working with the small groups. Steve and I both preferred 8<sup>th</sup> graders. I think that we both appreciated that the 8<sup>th</sup> graders were a little bit more mature and the discussions just a little more involved.

During the years that I worked with Steve, I never saw anything that gave me any concern about Steve being with the students. I never witnessed him trying to pay special attention to any child or separating a child from the group. When I had the children involved with a large group activity Steve stayed with the other Catechist unless I asked for the Catechists help. I really felt and still feel that Steve's reason for being there was his desire to share his faith with the children. There is a look that the children get when they finally get "it" or at least get their first glimpse of "it". That was what really motivated Steve. That is what Steve was there for.

I was shocked when the charges against Steve came out. I truly believe that nothing inappropriate ever happened with our PSR children. I am sure that Steve panicked when the police were at his house. I have worked with Steve long enough to know that Steve is a good man with a good heart despite his devils and that Steve would never purposely hurt another person.

Thank you for your time. I hope that you will be as lenient with Steve as you can.

Sincerely,

  
Nancy Zajac

April 9, 2015

Honorable Judge Richard Reinbold,

My name is Lori Madigan. I reside at 7584 N Gannett Rd in Sagamore Hills. My cell phone is 330.998.5330. I'm proud to say that I am a friend of Steve Bittel. Although I can't say for sure how many years, my guess is that has been for over ten years. My husband Michael, daughter Mackenzie and I, met Steve and his wife Patty through St Barnabas Parish. Steve, Mike and I were Eucharistic Ministers at the 7:30am and then 8:00am Sunday Mass. Because of this mutual volunteerism we became friends. Almost every Sunday, we along with up to 8 or more other parishioners would enjoy breakfast and conversation after Mass, frequenting different local restaurants each week. Steve and Patty have also been guests at our home. We have even meet socially to get together at a restaurant before a Browns game. I feel that my views and experiences with Steve Bittel are something that unfortunately the public, the police and the neighboring community doesn't know about him.

Steve has volunteered for many church functions and made himself available to serve on many committees. He was a Eucharistic Minister, a lector and helped with the children's Mass. He worked with the planning and the execution of the parish festival. He also helped me on many occasions by showing up at our fundraising Market Day sales, sorting products, helping gather orders and helping our customers. It was at Market Day that I would see the great interaction Steve had with many of the students at St Barnabas. They were not only happy to see and anxiously greet him but would enjoy having conversations about the class Steve taught at the school. They would proudly tell him how their investments were doing. Steve had a lot of one on one with the kids as they would come to him for the snacks we provided for the children that helped. I would also like you to know that never did I feel uncomfortable with Steve's interactions with myself, my daughter or children from St Barnabas. I know Steve also helped with the church's finance committee as well as other numerous organizations in the Nordonia Hills community. Besides the volunteering and paid positions in our area he is a generous and helpful person. I know of many times Steve donated his Browns season tickets to friends and family-not because the Browns were a losing team but because of his generosity. He helped a mutual friends from church-Richard and Luella Merecki. Steve donated a used computer and helped Luella-who at the time was in her late 70's-as she anxiously learned about computer technology. He's also generously replaced their smoke detectors as well as purchasing a CO detector for their home. Since Richard's passing in December, Steve helped me at Luella's home by hanging large framed pictures from the funeral that Luella enjoys immensely.

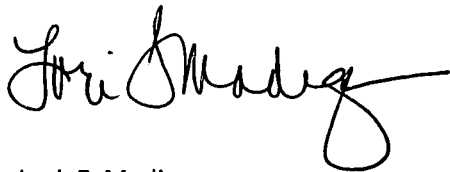
I personally know that people make mistakes in life. It might have to do with their disturbing past, bad life decisions, or possibly things just snowballing out of control. I also know that good people recognize their mistakes and move forward, trying to better themselves and those around them. I feel that Steve



COPY

knows and accepts that what has occurred was absolutely wrong. I also know and believe people deserve second chances in life. I'm asking you for leniency in Steve's sentencing. This generous, helpful intelligent man has many more hours of volunteerism and kind deeds in him that would benefit so many, many people. Thank you for your time.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lori Madigan". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending from the end of the name.

Lori F. Madigan

To: Judge Richard Reinbold

4/9/15

From: Mrs. Luella Merscki  
924 Cranbrook Dr. Northfield, OH 44067  
(330) 467-5107

Re: Steve Bittel

I have been a friend of Steve for eleven years. We met at St. Bernabes Church where we were Eucharistic Ministers. He is very devoted to his faith and was always involved in projects to help the church whether it was being on the Finance Committee, planning our festival, etc.

My husband had Alzheimers disease for the last five years. Prior to his illness <sup>he too was active</sup> in the church as a Eucharist Minister, Past Grand Knight of Columbus and spent ten years at South Point Hospital administering to the sick and dying. Steve was very special to us at all times. We would have breakfast with him, his wife and other friends on a weekly basis. He was always kind, thoughtful and gentle to two old timers!!

Some years ago when he visited our home he noticed our smoke alarms were not working and he immediately went out and bought 2 new smoke alarms plus a CO<sub>2</sub> detector. He wanted us to be safe. He has

always shown respect to us especially when visiting my 83 year old husband who passed away this past December from Alzheimer's. I also am 83 and have been my husband's caregiver and it was a joy to have Steve visit us which always brought a smile of recognition to my husband's face even when he was so ill. Not many younger people like to visit the old and infirmed but Steve never forgot us.

Back in 2009 Steve thought I should have a computer to keep in touch with family and friends who all live out of state. I told him I was too old to learn and he said nonsense and brought over an old Dell laptop. He had it connected and showed me how to use it. I have spent many hours of joy receiving photos and E mail and playing card games. It really helped me get through some long days of caregiving.

I believe the court should show leniency in sentencing Steve because we all make mistakes and God knows he is a good man and is capable of doing and helping others.

PLEASE HELP THIS MAN OF FAITH FOR I BELIEVE HE IS TRULY VERY SORRY FOR HIS MISTAKES!

Judge Richard Reinbold  
Summit County Courthouse  
205 South High Street  
Akron, OH 44308

April 7, 2015

Dear Judge Reinbold;

My name is Bob Fisher, and my wife Annette and I would like to take this opportunity to let you know a little about my best friend for the past 30 years, Steve Bittel. More than being my best friend, he is a major member of our family. This is one man who should not be defined by what happened over a period of a couple of hours in his life. It is the rest of his life that truly paints the picture of what kind of a person he is.

Steve has been guided by God, doing everything he could for his fellow man. He has been a key member of our church, St. Barnabas, by being involved in everything from being a Lecturer to overseeing the Parish Festival. Steve has taught religious education classes, headed the finance committee, was a Eucharistic minister and even applied to become a Deacon. Steve has volunteered at the Holy Name Ozanam Food Center and even recruited me to join him.

You don't have to be his best friend; just being an acquaintance of Steve's means you have someone that you can always count on. Many of us have teased Steve about how long it has been taking him to finish all of the projects around his house, but the reason it takes him so long is because he is spending most of his rare free time helping someone else get their projects done. His friends have always come first, no matter what help is needed.

Steve is a very hard worker, whether it is work for friends or one of his multiple jobs. As long as I have known Steve, he has been a true multi-tasker. We both worked together at Window Systems (where we met) as window installers. We would work long hour days, six days a week, but Steve still managed to be a full time student at Cleveland State College attending classes at night and earned his Bachelor's degree, I believe, in about four years. I still don't know when he slept.

Steve has been very successful in his life and has used that success to help those less fortunate. Steve and his wife Patty have been very generous in providing for others. For years Annette and I would exchange Christmas gifts with the Bittels. Finally, after telling us about some of the charities they donate to at Christmas, we all decided to donate the money we would have spent on each other to World Vision. We have continued to give to World Vision ever since.

Annette and I have six daughters, now ranging in age from 30 to 47 years old. All of our girls have thought of Steve as part of our family, in fact so much so that we made the decision that if something would have happened to us when the last two girls were young and still at home, we wanted Steve and Patty to be their guardians. These were two people that expressed the honesty and moral values we felt would be a good example to our children. We still feel the same way.

I have told you only a small portion of the things that define who Steve Bittel is. What he becomes is now in your hands. I know that Steve made a serious misjudgment and made it worse when he believed that everything he had worked so hard to build was being destroyed because of a few moments of curiosity and weakness. I also know that the only person that could have gotten hurt that day was Steve.

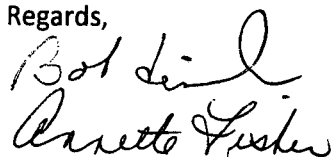
I ask that you consider leniency for Steve based on what he has done and what he will continue to do for everyone around him. Since the incident, Steve has been getting the help he needed. I have spoken to him at great lengths over the past seven months, and I can see the way he has been affected. Steve is already paying for his crimes in a way that is more effective than any incarceration and is making him a better human being than he thought he could be. All of this has made him realize what is truly important in life.

The day of the incident, Steve thought he would be abandoned by everyone for what he had done; especially his family and friends for letting them all down. That is Steve. He was more worried about those around him than what was going to happen to him. Because we all know what kind of a person Steve really is, we are working together to help him. I am sure that you have received a number of letters from Steve's family and friends that are also offering support for Steve.

The question is; what future will provide the best return to the society we all live in? What sentence will bring the best return? I pray daily that you have the Wisdom of Solomon and make a decision that will be the right one.

Thank you for reading this and may God inspire your decision.

Regards,

Handwritten signatures of Bob and Annette Fisher. The signature for Bob is written above the signature for Annette.

Bob and Annette Fisher

7437 Dorwick Drive

Northfield Center, OH

44067

Phone: (330)467-0197

Mallory Fisher  
1370 Sloane Ave.  
APT #207  
Lakewood, OH 44107  
(440) 832-0747

April 7, 2015

Honorable Judge Richard Reinbold,

My name is Mallory Fisher and I am writing to you regarding Steve Bittel. I have known Steve for a little shy of 31 years, which has been my whole life. Steve has been my father's best friend since before I was born and my second father. The relationship that I have with Steve can be put simply-- he's the man who walks me down the aisle if my father is unable to do so.

It's hard for me to recall my first impression of Steve because he has always been in my life but I can remember my first memory of Steve. I was 3 years old and my parent's had a wedding to attend so Steve offered to babysit me and my older sister that night. Steve did not have any kids of his own, probably knew nothing about taking care of 3 and 4 year old girls, but he was amazing. I remember feeling safe, feeling comforted, and feeling that he would do anything to make sure we had a good night. That night Steve did it all! He took me to tee ball practice, made us dinner, and even treated us to Dairy Queen. That night, I also got sick and threw up in his car. He never got mad, frustrated, or annoyed. He was calm, gentle, did anything he could to make sure I was feeling better, and comforted me until my parents got home. That memory and that impression is what has stayed with me all these years.

As I grew older, my parent's moved from one side of town to the other and it wasn't too much longer until Steve and his wife followed us. As Steve and his wife were building their house, we would go over and check on the progress of the house. He would also make sure to show me and my sister the progress of "our rooms." It was at that moment that my parent's let us know that if anything were to happen to them, Steve and his wife would be our guardians. A decision that my parent's made over 20 years ago and without any doubt in my mind, a decision they would still make today. This speaks volumes about the type of person Steve is and the characteristics my parent's also see in him.

Most recently, I was diagnosed with with bilateral pulmonary emboli and 4 blood clots in my right leg. This caused me to pass out at work and rushed to the emergency room. Steve dropped everything he was doing to take my father all the way to Elyria Hospital and to be a support for my family during this difficult time. I was in the hospital for five days and it was Steve who was calling to check up on me, supporting my parents emotionally, and showed genuine concern for my well being.

I am fully aware of the charges being brought against Steve. These charges are simply out of character. Steve is a caring, kind, intelligent, down to earth, and loving person. Steve puts all others before himself in so many ways. He is always a phone call away, will drop by just to check on us and see how we are, and most importantly a best friend not only to my father but to our family. There are so many examples I could describe that would show you how amazing Steve is to not just me and my family, his family, and the community but there just isn't enough paper to do that.

Steve and his wife found out years ago that they were unable to have children. I never saw the pain and grief they must have felt knowing that information and wanting a family of their own. Instead, Steven treated me and my sisters and his nieces and nephews as his own. Whenever I would see him he was genuinely interested in what was going on in my life, making sure things were going well with me, but also making sure to give me guidance to grow up and be a successful and productive citizen. Steve is one of the reason's I succeeded in college and went on to earn a bachelor's degree and master's degree.

I am writing this letter to you to not only show you the positive characteristics of Steve Bittel, but to request leniency in his sentencing. Steve has been working hard towards rehabilitation and a harsher sentence could negatively impact his continuity of care. Steve has already experienced many consequences related to his actions last September however and a harsher sentence could cause more harm in the future.

I hope you consider this information in regards to the charges Steve Bittel is facing. Whatever the outcome of the trial, I want it to be known that Steve is a caring, gentle, dependable, loving, intelligent upstanding citizen of this country. Thank you for your time and consideration regarding this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mallory Fisher". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the word "Sincerely,".

Mallory Fisher

Thomas & Kathleen Raffay  
4497 West 144 Street  
Cleveland, OH 44135  
216-251-0674

Honorable Judge Richard Reinbold  
Summit County Courthouse  
205 South High Street  
Akron, Ohio 44308  
3rd floor-Judge Rowlands Courtroom

April 8, 2015

Dear Honorable Judge Reinbold:

Tom Raffay, my husband, and I, Kathy Raffay, would like to thank you for taking the time to read our letter of leniency. We hope that we can convey in this letter the importance that Steve Bittel has in our daily lives. He is a gentle, very loving, caring, and generous person that we have come to know and love dearly. Tom has known Steve for 47 years. They grew up together, as neighbors, living across the street from one another.

I, (Kathy) have known Steve for about 30 years. Steve was dating my sister, Patty, at the time when she was diagnosed with cancer. He has a caring nature and chose to stay by her side. Steve was compassionate and supportive to Patty as she fought her battle with cancer. He knew the outcome of her treatment would be difficult to face but stayed with her as she struggled to get back on her feet to finish her college education. We are so grateful to Steve for being so strong and loving. Later, Steve married my sister becoming our brother-in-law.

Steve has always been a loving and supporting uncle to our three children. Tom and I trust Steve to be that uncle who gave them good advice and helped them become the successful individuals that they are today. Our children have always felt comfortable spending time and talking with their Uncle Steve.

Steve has also helped family, friends, and his community in many ways. Tom and I know Steve puts others before himself. We have come to depend on Steve's knowledge and helpful hand as we tackle many family projects together. He is both handy and knowledgeable and works well with others. Steve's mother and mother-in-law, now in their 80's, are very dependent on his help and guidance. He is a very important family member to all of us. Steve has given countless hours volunteering at his church. He served on the finance and fundraiser committees. His faith is very important to him. Steve also enjoyed working as a public servant helping to better his community.

Steve's love of giving so much of himself to others has been taken away. Being a public figure has made it difficult to go anywhere because he is always under the public's scrutiny. We can see the sadness he is suffering knowing that his life will never be the same. Lost of employment and serving his church and community were the results of his poor judgment. What he once had is now lost. Steve had to miss many of our family gatherings. Not being a part of our son's

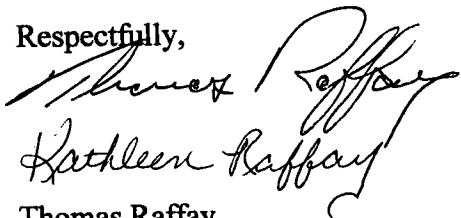


wedding was a great loss to Steve and to us, his family, as well. Christmas Holidays were not the same without him.

We request the court for leniency. We feel society would not be served by incarceration. Steve has lost so much already. He is getting professional help for his addiction. He vowed he would never go down that road again. Steve's demeanor seems truly remorseful for what he had done. He realizes the shame and embarrassment he caused to himself and to his family and friends will be a burden he will have to live with forever. Tom and I feel it would be completely out of Steve's character to cause physical harm to others when all his life he has tried to care and help others.

Steve Bittel is our important and loved family member, a good friend, and a caring and loving husband to my sister, Patty. Tom and I plan to be in court to support Steve and my sister, Patty, on April 22, 2015.

Respectfully,

Handwritten signatures of Thomas Raffay and Kathleen Raffay. The signature of Thomas Raffay is written in cursive and is positioned above the signature of Kathleen Raffay, which is also in cursive.

Thomas Raffay  
Kathleen Raffay

April 7, 2015

Honorable Richard Reinbold  
c/o Summit County Courthouse  
205 South High Street  
Akron, OH 44308

Dear Judge Reinbold:

My name is John Marion, a CPA and CFO, and a 35 year resident of Sagamore Hills. I am writing on behalf of Steve Bittel, whom I have known now for at least 15 years. I was in court to see him plead guilty to the felony charges – so I am painfully aware of what he did. I can't pretend to understand his actions or his frame of mind that day. In spite of that, I am compelled to write this letter to share my experience with him that tells quite a different story.

I am a very active volunteer at St. Barnabas Church, which is where I met Steve. We first worked together on the Finance Council. Since that time we have served together on many activities, including the church festival, at church liturgies, the school subcommittee, and at a regional food pantry. I am also aware of many additional social, civic and spiritual activities he has been involved in. I must say, without exaggeration, I am not aware of another single individual who has dedicated more volunteer hours to our community than Steve. I have admired his dedication and selfless commitment. In fact he has been a role model who has inspired me to be more involved.

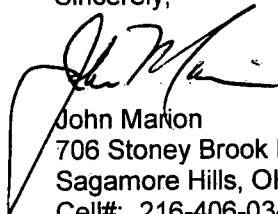
More recently my wife Cathy and I have gotten to know Steve and his wife Patty on a more personal level. I have come to see that Steve is dedicated to his family and has a very deep faith. I don't want to be trite; but Steve always, always puts the needs of others in front of his own. It is very hard for me to reconcile all of this with the felony actions that he took. But to me, the years of experience I have both shared and witnessed are more reflective of his character. He is not perfect, and can exhibit a strong personality at times. However, I have never known him to be a threat or seen him cause anyone harm in any way. Quite the contrary, I have seen him touch the lives of many in a very positive way.

My faith led me to contact his wife Patty while he was in jail, and then Steve after his release. Trust me, it was very difficult. Yet within minutes, after some mutual tears, all I saw was a humble, contrite, and warm human being. In Patty I saw unconditional love and a pillar of support that we all could learn from. I believe his pleading guilty was characteristic of his taking accountability for his actions and his way to spare his family and friends.

I believe that Steve has learned much from this experience, and that he sees himself and the impact of his actions differently. I also feel that longer incarceration will not serve to further rehabilitate him. In fact I think that the shorter the incarceration, the more days of service he will devote to his community. I believe Steve when he talks about how God used this 2x4 to break him from his addiction and how he is already a better person because of it.

I hope these comments help you see a more complete picture of Steve. I am available and willing to be contacted should you have any questions.

Sincerely,



John Marion  
706 Stoney Brook Rd.  
Sagamore Hills, OH 44067  
Cell#: 216-406-0346  
E-mail: jmarion93@aol.com

David Flask  
9321 Jason Drive  
Twinsburg, OH 44087  
330-405-7090

April 9, 2015

Honorable Judge Richard Reinbold  
Summit County Courthouse  
205 South High Street  
Akron, OH 44308

Dear Honorable Judge Richard Reinbold:

I am writing this letter on behalf of Steven C. Bittel who is a defendant in an upcoming court case. Mr. Bittel is being charged with pandering obscenity involving a minor, felony pandering, several counts of illegal use of a minor in nudity oriented material and four counts of obstructing official business. I am reaching out to you because Steve has not only been a long-time friend but also he is an extraordinary person.

I have known Steve for over 25 years. We were officers in the Accounting Association at Cleveland State back in 1991. Steve and I both worked together from 1995-1996 and again from 1997 to early 2000. Over the years Steve and I became very close. Steve is a good person who will do anything to help another person. I have seen it many times over the years. His real joy has come from helping others. Whether that be home remodeling projects, personal finance or as a volunteer through his church. I do not believe the events that unfolded during the last year are in any way indicative of who Steven Bittel is. He is a quality person and is completely self-less when it comes to giving to others. He has given thousands of dollars and countless hours to his church. He would give the shirt off his back to a stranger.

Steve has acknowledged what he is done. He knows he let several people down, most importantly his wife Patty. He is remorseful for what has happened. As I told him over the telephone last September that one mistake does not define a person. I don't think that's ever truer than in reference to Steven Bittel. Steve has lead an exemplary life as a contributing member of society but more importantly he is a good person with a huge heart. He never intended to hurt anyone with his actions. In Steve's case I believe that sending him to jail will not make the world a better place.

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Honorable Judge Richard Reinbold

April 9, 2015

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I hope your consider this information in regards to the charges Steve is facing. Whatever the outcome I want it to be known that Steve is an incredible, caring person that happened to exercise poor judgement for a relatively short period of time which in turn lead to bad decision on September 5<sup>th</sup>, 2014.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "David M. Flask".

David Flask

April 6, 2015

The Honorable Judge Rowlands  
Summit County Court of Common Pleas  
209 S. High Street  
Akron, OH 44308

RE: CR 2014-09-2712

Dear Judge Rowlands,

I am writing today in the matter of Steven Bittel, currently before you for sentencing. I realize that the charges before him are very serious. However, I want you to be informed of other facets of Steve Bittel that you may not be aware.


Steve and his wife have been friends of my wife and me for almost 30 years. Steve has always been a good friend and willing to pitch in and help with any projects we have undertaken. We actually met him when he owned a window company and we went to him for a bid at the encouragement of a relative. Not only did he give us a fair bid, he stopped by the house the next day because he knew we may need help and he was working on a similar project in the neighborhood. Even when I want to put something off he takes the initiative and in the end convinces me that we should just start the project. In that way we have replaced doors, installed windows, and done a myriad of other projects that would not have been easily completed without him. Further, he traveled to our home in Florida without being asked to assist in a total renovation of the space. Steve is a very creative man and was able to help us complete our home much the same way he refurbished a home on Cleveland's Westside which was a showpiece.

Similarly, he assisted in re-doing the church kitchen at West Park Baptist Church without remuneration because the church was unable to afford the update. He is always willing to stop what he is doing to help a friend.

He was also very beneficial when we were streamlining our business record keeping. He literally brought us into the 21st century. What took us hours and hours to do he was able to condense into a manageable routine. Not only were our records easier to maintain, he also made it so that creating reports was convenient even for me. It did not matter what time of the day we needed help—even the middle of the night—when there was a problem he was available.

In short, we understand that what has happened was wrong, but we want you to know that there is so much more to this person than his indiscretions. He has been a good friend to our family. Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,

  
Frank and Lesa Kaesberger

**STEVEN M. SMITH**

6427 Acres drive  
Independence, Ohio 44131  
216.408.3344 (m)  
[stevensmith@ameritech.net](mailto:stevensmith@ameritech.net)

April 13, 2015

The Honorable Richard Reinbold  
Summit County Court of Common Pleas  
209 S High Street  
Akron, Ohio 44308

Dear Judge Reinbold,

I have known Steve Bittel both personally and professionally since 1995. I have had the pleasure and benefit of working with Steve on-and-off for the past 20-years. Steve was the controller for several companies in which I was the chief financial officer. In his capacity, Steve was instrumental in the financial management and accounting controls of businesses, which had market values in excess of \$750 million. During this time, Steve and I worked very close and spent a great deal of time together and at no time in our relationship did I witness or was I aware of Steve acting inappropriately, unethically or unprofessionally. In addition to our professional relationship, Steve is a trusted family friend who my wife of 25-years and my three children ages 20 (daughter), 19 and 15 have great respect for.

To me a true friend is someone I can trust and can count on, regardless of the circumstance or cost. When I think of a friend, I think of Steve. Another way to look at it is, if I ever needed to make an emergency call at 3 am, Steve would be the person I would call. I have trusted Steve with my family, finances and possessions and he has done nothing but be helpful, supportive and a gentleman in our dealings. In reflection, I realize the person who I believed was one of the strongest people I have ever met also faces challenges that require help from his friends. So today, I am writing this letter, as my 3 am call, to hopefully provide you a perspective on how Steve lived his life in lieu of the few hours in his life that has currently defined him.

Furthermore, in the many years that I have known Steve, he has exhibited sacrificial predispositions to help others in all situations, regardless if it was for a friend or stranger. His kind and generous actions, even though he didn't know it, motivated and humbled me and others around him. He gave his time, talent and treasures to others without a disingenuous motives or looking for something in return. That is one of his special gifts. A gift that I hope he is able to continue to give to others. Personally, I have observed Steve living by a one simple belief; ***"when in doubt, do the next right thing and if you are unsure, do what is most difficult."*** I have never met a person who is willing to help, regardless of the time or the cost.

I know that Steve has broken the law, because he told me he did. He told me the reason he accepted the plea agreement is because he was wrong and he did not want to put his family through the process nor did he want the government to incur undue expense (the controller in him). I look at his actions as ***"doing the next right thing and to most it may appear to be the most difficult."*** Since the events of last year, Steve and I have many meaningful conversations. Below is a summary of conversations that may help in your sentencing Steve:

1. He knew what he was doing was wrong. He tried to stop. He told me he prayed for God to help him stop and during our discussions he realized that God answered his

The Honorable Richard Reinbold

April 8, 2015

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prayers, but in a way he never imagined ... a much more meaningful way. Please, please reflect on this statement. I do not bring this up in a cavalier manner. Steve told me he knew he was wrong and he tried to stop but he could not. He prayed for God to help and his prayers were answered. What initially appeared to be "bad" is now "great" as long as he is faithful in moving forward and healing. Steve can no longer hide his actions. He needs to face his demons and incur the consequences of his actions. He is getting help. People are able to give back to Steve. Once on the road to recovery, he will and should be ordered (instructed) to help others with similar problems. Steve is smart, dedicated and committed. Judge Reinbold, you have the ability to be part of God's plan, please use the opportunity in sentencing Steve to take a bad event and make something special from it.

2. Steve told me he was molested as a child and his father suffered from depression, which ultimately lead him committing suicide. I new of his father's depression, but did not know of him being molested. He also shared with me the regret that days before his father committed suicide, he was going to stop by and tell him he loved his dad. He did not stop by and never spoke to his dad. It haunts him that he did not stop and talk with his father. I bring this up, because these events have allowed many, many people to stop by and tell Steve how much they love him. Steve may finally be realizing the number of people he has positively impacted and their desire to reciprocate. Steve is loved by many, not because of his words but because of his actions. Again, this event will help Steve, not hurt him.
3. The counseling has been of great help to Steve. It has allowed him to open up for his sins and it has helped him lay out a pathway for success and accountability. Having to face and discuss his action has provided relief, embarrassment and hope for him to repent, understand and change his actions.
4. Steve is accepting the consequences to his actions and will continue to accept whatever he needs to deal with as a result of his actions. He is anxious as the day of sentencing nears, but will embrace your decision and make the best of the situation he created and cooperate in a manner that the system desires.

God is going to use Steve, regardless of the amount of time he is sentenced. The apostle Paul did his greatest work in prison. I am confident Steve will be faithful and respectful wherever he is, but from a purely selfish perspective, I feel that both Steve and the community would be better served if he was not sent to prison and is allowed to rebuild and refocus outside of prison. Steve is a good, trustworthy, and dignified man who has made a terrible mistake. I truly believe that everyone would be better served if he was kept out of prison and allowed to continue to heal. I humbly ask that you do not alter the direction of his life based on a bad decision and impose the minimum time you are able to impose. If you have any further questions, please feel free to contact me on 216-408-3344.

Sincerely yours,



Steven M. Smith

March 29, 2015

RE: Steven C. Bittel

Dear Judge Richard Reinbold,

My name is Patty Bittel, Steve's wife, and I have known Steve for over 31 years. I would like to share with you the wonderful qualities of this man that I have been happily married to for over 23 years.

Steve is a kind, caring, and gentle man. He has been so supportive to me throughout our entire relationship. While I battled a serious medical condition, he was there for me physically and emotionally every step of the way. While ill, I wanted to quit college but he encouraged me to continue and told me that I could "lean on him" when I needed strength. He has always been gentle with me and has always treated me with the utmost respect. He makes me feel loved and it is when we are together that I am the happiest. Steve is not only my husband, he is my best friend. Every time I see Steve find a bug or spider in our home and carry it outside to be free or care for our pet rabbits, I am reminded of Steve's gentle manner.

Other qualities that come to mind when I, and others, think of Steve is his thoughtful and generous personality. Steve is usually one of the first people to offer to help when someone mentions that they have a problem or could use assistance. Whether it's to repair, install, move, or volunteer for something, to help family, friends, his parish, or his community, Steve is there to lend a hand. I have heard Steve say so many times, "if not me, then who?" He has spent countless volunteer hours on numerous parish committees, weeding our church grounds, and packing bags to feed the poor at the Ozanam Center. He even gave money to a single mother to keep her car from being repossessed. He is an excellent example to others of what it means to give of one's time, talent, and treasure.

Steve is an honest, hardworking, and intelligent man. On many occasions I have seen him return to a store because he noticed they undercharged him or gave him too much change and he wants to make it right. He is proud of earning his college degree while working full-time to pay for college on his own. On a regular basis I hear people, including myself, asking him his opinion or advice because we trust and value what he has to say. Whether it's about general life, business, or financial issues, I believe his response will be an honest one that comes from the heart and with the best of intentions.

I know and understand the events regarding Steve's guilty plea. I believe he had a poor lapse in judgement when his addiction led him to view inappropriate pictures of children. I have never witnessed or known Steve to be inappropriate with a child. Instead, I have witnessed how Steve has been a wonderful uncle. I have heard our nephews and nieces tell him how they have learned so much from him while growing up, they enjoy being around him, and that he has been a positive influence in their lives.

I have never seen Steve as distraught as he was the day the police served the search warrant. His behavior that day was totally uncharacteristic of his normal behavior. I believe that his actions that day of picking up a gun and wanting to commit suicide were out of total fear, panic, and unresolved issues related to his father's suicide when he was young. Since that day, I have seen Steve be so remorseful for all the pain this has caused to so many people. He tells me all the time how sorry he is and how he is so disappointed in himself for his actions. He started seeking counseling soon after his arrest and I know this has really been helping him cope, understand, and become more self-aware and in control of his actions. He has told me that his desire is to become an even better person.



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I respectfully request and urge leniency in the sentencing of Steve to probation or at least the lowest possible sentence. I ask you to consider all his wonderful positive qualities that he has displayed throughout his entire life of 54 years and that this is his first offense. I depend on him physically, emotionally, and financially and I need and want him in our home. He is my everything and I support and love him with all my heart.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Patricia Bittel". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the typed name and address.

Patricia Bittel  
189 Ballantrae Drive  
Sagamore Hills, OH 44067  
(330) 468-7738

COPY

4340 West 146<sup>th</sup> Street  
Cleveland, Ohio 44135

April 8, 2015

The Honorable Judge Richard Reinbold

Dear Judge Reinbold,

I am contacting you about Steven Charles Bittel, my son for fifty-four years whom you will be sentencing in a few weeks. I have always known Steven to be a kind, loving, and good person. Throughout both grade school and high school he repeatedly volunteered to do different things like help the neighbors cut their lawns and visit with the elderly in a nursing homes. He has always had a strong commitment to his religion, even as a child, assisting at church as an alter-boy. After high school, he put himself thru college and then married his present wife Patty.

After building his home in Sagamore Hills, he and his wife continued their involvement with their religion at Saint Barnabas where they volunteered where-ever needed. Steven became a Eucharistic Minister, organized and ran the church fair for many years, assisted with the food bank, and was on the Finance Council.

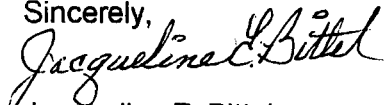
With the type of financial work he does, he became aware of some problems with the school system in his area. He decided to run for President of the School Board of Nordonia Hills because he wanted to turn it into the best it could be. He was elected and was doing a very good job.

He has always been sharing with his time. He has constantly done work at his mother-in-law's old and new house before and after her husband had passed away. He once, with family and friends, put a new roof on my house, and just recently gave me a beautiful new kitchen. It seems he is always trying to make the world a better place. He even took his wife, his mother-in-law, and myself on a vacation in Hawaii.

It's a shame, this thing that has happened. I don't know why this illegal stuff is allowed on this internet. It is only a temptation to good people when they are weak.

I know you have to pass sentence, but please be lenient and consider all the good he has done. It is himself that he has hurt the most. I implore you to think of his loving wife and all of our family as you make a judgment on Steven. Please be lenient and have mercy on him.

Sincerely,



Jacqueline E. Bittel  
(216) 671-0757

2157 Carabel Avenue  
Lakewood, Ohio 44107

April 6, 2015

The Honorable Richard Reinbold

Dear Judge Reinbold,

I am contacting you on behalf of my younger brother Steven C. Bittel, whom you will be passing sentence upon this April the 22<sup>nd</sup>.

I am requesting leniency because Steve has always been a good and unique type of person who goes above and beyond to not only help his family members, but also his many friends. Even though his stature is large, his spirit and soul are gentle. He would never hurt or corrupt anybody or any living thing. I have never seen Steve staring at or acting strangely towards anyone. And I've never received any weird feed-back from anyone about him. He has been nothing but loving to everyone and to even his own pets. He feeds the wild life around his house and will even remove spiders and sets them free in this backyard.

Steve has helped me many times with not only some difficult tasks, but also with some difficult times in my life. For example, when I was sighted by the City of Lakewood to paint my house, he offered, took charge, and expertly vinyl sided my house, which was a lot of work. He also helped me build my garage. When I had become severely depressed after being laid-off from a job that I wanted to keep, Steve spend many hours over the coarse of many weeks, conversing with me and keeping me mentally on the right track.

I can't imagine the total despair my brother felt that morning the FBI and police showed up at his home. The overwhelming realization of embarrassment and loss of respect by letting everyone down. Not only has he let down his family and friends, but everyone from Saint Barnabas's Church, Finance Committee, PRS Group, and the Nordonia Hills School District.

I do accept my brother has broken the law and that a penalty has to be paid. But Steve may have already lost more then most that have gone through this situation. By not seeking professional help and by hiding his problem, he has disappointed a vary large number of people, lost his professional status, lost a promising financial future, and lost his social acceptance. He has lost a lot of what he has been building for years.

Respectfully,

*Edward M. Bittel*

Edward M. Bittel  
216-221-7113

Ryan Bittel  
Address: 1444 Firethorn Drive  
Cell phone: 440 537 6405  
Relationship: Nephew; 26 years

Dear Honorable Judge Richard Reinbold,

I have been Steve Bittels nephew for 26 years. During that time period, I have admired my Uncle Steve. His unselfish love for life has had a profound impact on my life. My Uncle has been my friend, mentor, instructor, counsellor, guide, and most importantly my educator. My Uncle is a person who leads by example and it is contagious. His wide spread respect for everyone has rubbed off on me. He has been such a good role model and having him apart of my life has made me a better person. I have always trusted my Uncle to give me good advice and I have made better decisions because of it. Spending time with and having an Uncle like Steve, has influenced me to help others succeed and give back to the community. My uncle has taught me how to look for the good in all, how to be a better husband, how to be a handy man, and how to always do the right thing. These attributes my Uncle has displayed makes it easy for me to say that I will always emulate him. His lifestyle has left a lasting imprint. If it hadn't, I surely would not be the person I am today.

I thought so highly of my Uncle Steve that I chose for him to read at my wedding and do not regret that decision. I chose for my Uncle to have a prominent role in my wedding because of his love and passion for others, especially my Aunt Patty. My Aunt was suffering from cancer when she was dating my Uncle at a young age. My Uncles love goes beyond physical and he was there spiritually with my Aunt. My Uncle Steve's unselfish love has been everlasting and he has helped many people along the way. My Uncle does things for others benefit and not for his own. He has made a decision to dedicate his life toward helping and loving others.

Decisions are often what the world based on. I believe the court should show leniency to my Uncle during their decision. My Uncle made one left turn in his life but he is back making right turns. My Uncle has accomplished and affected so many people's lives in a positive way that one negative flaw should not depreciate my Uncles value. His worth to his family, church, community, friends, school, neighbors, and the rest of the world has been constantly recognized. His accomplishments and awards have displayed how great of a person he has been and will continue to be.

My Uncle has shown remorse for his actions and has taken full responsibility for what he has done. I am seeking mercy for my Uncle Steve when you decide his punishment. My Uncle Steve is dedicated to changing the world and making it a better place. I have faith that the right course of action will be displayed by the court system and thank you for considering my request.

Sincerely,

Ryan Bittel

Judge Richard Reinbold

I am Steve's older brother and have known him all his life. We've had a strong relationship; we didn't talk or know what each other were doing weekly but never any problems. We even worked together for a few years. Steve and his wife Patty couldn't have children, they were great with ours and all their family and friend's children. Steve got through to my children a few times when I couldn't because of his success in life.

Steve is ambitious always worked long hours skipping sleep at times. At the time of his arrest he had just started working with a third company [three at the same time] hoping that his wife and him would work together. At the same time he volunteered at his church on the business side as well as lecturing and teaching in the school. He found time to take a position with Nordonia schools as well. Away from work Steve would be working on his or others homes, they didn't vacation too much. My brother has always been driven, trying to improve, thinking or finding out how to do just about anything, he's passionate about that.

The events of 9/5/14 shocked anyone who knew Steve. He told me the officers lives were never in danger, only his. Also his addiction to pornography was to all forms, he didn't save it or sell it he erased it and he hated himself because of it and he couldn't quit viewing it.

I know Steve's actions can't be dismissed. Sir I know you have read countless letters asking for leniency, this is my first. My brother confessed some of what he did, I didn't want to know. Steve claims that after his arrest and time in jail he will never view it again. There is no place in the world for child pornography or any crime against children. I believe Steve will never ever again engage in pornography. I believe in my brother, his goodness, his remorse, his commitment to stop his addition. Yes I love Steve we are brother forever. Yes I am discussed

with his actions. He is too, he couldn't stop telling me how he hated himself and how he's let everyone down, how hard he worked to achieve and it's gone.

Ninety plus percent of the world that knows Steve is behind him. I was overwhelmed by the calls I received in support, people couldn't believe what happened but wanted to help in any way possible. Our family, friends and my business associates all are committed to help Steve now and when he is released from prison. It was stated that the courthouse couldn't hold all the people that would show up to support Steve, I have to agree.

Steve has proved his value in our society, with a minimum sentence he will prove that again.

If one event, one sin, one crime, one addiction, will condemn a life of service, volunteering, achievement, good works, loyalty and love how is there hope for any of us.

Sincerely,

Robert J. Bittel Jr.

29307 Hastings Dr.

N. Olmsted Oh. 44070

H # 440-777-4856

c # 216-970-5815

Mr. Joseph M Raffay  
10885 W Sprague Road  
North Royalton, OH 44133-1256  
216.308.8474

Dear Judge Richard Reinbold,

I am Joseph Raffay, nephew of Steve Bittel. I have lived in the Cleveland area my entire life and have been involved in many activities throughout the community. With a strong supportive family cast that extended past my parents, I have been provided a great childhood where I went to a private grade school, Ascension and private high school, St. Edward High School. I know it was a struggle financially, but my parents made sacrifices so I could go there. Those same sacrifices were because of the strong family support we have for each other. I went on to the University of Toledo to acquire a BBA in Finance. I worked two jobs while attending school full time to pay my tuition and living expenses. I continued my education at Tri-C where I earned an EMT certificate. At still a young age of 31, I recently was married to my wonderful wife, Lalit Patil. I am currently the Director of Database Management and CRM at Precision Dialogue Marketing in Westlake Ohio. We are currently about 400 people between my office and our sister office in Chicago, Precision Dialogue Direct.

A lot of my early success is not just because of my hard work, but the guidance and dedication of my family. My parents had a lot to do with my upbringing and success, but among all my other influencers, my uncle Steve has been just as responsible for where I am today. He has always been there to encourage, help, guide, and support me. I was in a very hard place once in my life, but he talked to me every day, he took action, he tried to help, and over a long period of time he helped me through it. He didn't just do that for me, but he did those same things for all of his nephews and nieces. Since childhood, he has always been very close and took an interest to help me throughout my life. He provided me with things my parents couldn't especially when it came to the finer things in life. He encouraged my older brother to be a doctor. If it was not for him, he would have gone in a different direction. Steve has always been that uncle we all looked up to and wanted to become one day.

It is very hard now. Things have changed. A lot has changed. I have talked with my uncle, and he knows what he did wrong. I know what he did is wrong. Even in spite of all the wrong doings, he will always be my uncle. He will also be someone I still look up to outside of the wrong. The many great, and good things he has done cannot be taken away from his good character. He isn't a monster, he is someone that needs the same support that he has always given each and every one of us. He would give the shirt off his back to someone in need. He treated me and my brothers like his own sons. He was so busy helping other people that he never took the time to actually help himself.

Steve Bittel has been more than just an uncle to me. He has been a mentor and guide. He has never hurt anyone. He never would do that either. He is not a criminal. At no point throughout my entire life have I ever felt uncomfortable, threatened, or fearful of him. I would encourage the courts to look at him as a man, a man that does need some help, but never got it. As a society, we want to help rehabilitate those with alcohol problems. We want to help rehabilitate those with drug problems. We want to help those with eating disorders. Some people just need help, and we have identified just that. Steve Bittel does need help. He has a loving, supporting family that will do just that. Every person needs a second chance, a chance to improve and become better. A lot of the things he has loved has been ripped away because of his actions. He has already been punished. His life is changed forever. The less it has to change for the rest of us, the better not for him, but for all the people that do want to help and still love him. My uncle was not there to see me get married, he was not there to do the reading he was scheduled to do at our wedding. I know this has been hard on me and my wife, and we ask that it doesn't need to get any harder. We want him to be a part of our lives, a part of our firsts we get to do in life as we continue to expand and grow as a family and as good, loving people.

Sincerely,



Joseph Raffay



Lalit Patil



COPY

Jeremy Raffay  
18071 Brick Mill Run  
Strongsville, Ohio 44136  
(216) 513-3367

Honorable Judge Richard Reinbold  
Summit County Courthouse  
205 South High Street  
Akron, Ohio 44308

April 3, 2015

Dear Honorable Judge Richard Reinbold,

I am writing to plead for leniency when sentencing my uncle, Steven Bittel. I have known Uncle Steve for 28 years and can assure you he is a man of good character, willing to drop everything to lend a helping hand, and gives back to the community. I have had opportunity to reflect on the countless times my uncle has helped those suffering from personal, financial, or spiritual difficulty and I have come to the realization that his belief of service to others is most important to him.

As a devoted, caring and loving husband, Uncle Steve continues to encourage and challenge me to be the best man I can be. He is a strong role model for me in my family life. Uncle Steve is receiving the personal help that he needs and I do not believe that harsh punishment and retribution would allow my uncle to continue his repayment of service to our community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jeremy Raffay". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the word "Sincerely,".

Courtney Bittel  
29307 Hasting Dr.  
North Olmsted, Ohio, 44070  
Home: (440)777-4856  
Cell: (440)799-1780

Dear Honorable Judge Richard Reinbold,

My name is Courtney Bittel, niece of Steve Bittel, I am writing to ask for leniency when it comes to sentencing my Uncle Steve. As a judge you probably read thousands of these letters, so I am trying to figure out what I can say to help you understand why my Uncle Steve is a man that words cannot fully describe. My Uncle Steve has been an active member in my twenty-four years I have been alive, and more importantly my role model. My Uncle Steve is a care giver to his family and friends, an active member of his church, and actively involved in his community. The way that my Uncle Steve has always put everyone else's needs before his own is a rare quality to find in a person. My Uncle Steve has an energy about him that lights up a room when he enters, makes you feel safe, and knows how to make you feel like your opinion, even if it is not his, is important and carries value.

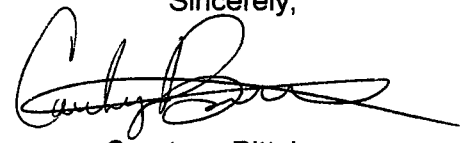
The best way I can get you to know the type of person my Uncle Steve is to tell you a few of my endless memories. One of my earliest memories is having dinner with the Bittel side of my family. I had to be only five years old and my Grandma, Steve's mom, set down her homemade biscuits. I of course went to reach for one when my Uncle Steve said, "Hey, hey, what do you think you're doing. Are you a heathen? We have to say grace." My Uncle Steve had that specific look on his face that he gets; it's almost like a smirk. He has always had a way of correcting someone without making the person feel like they are being yelled at. Whenever my Uncle Steve has been around my siblings and me, he has made it a point to spend time playing sports, playing video games, or just finding out what is going on in our lives. I remember my brothers and I were playing basketball; I was probably seven, before my uncle Steve and Aunt Patty came over for a barbeque. My brothers which are older would not pass me the ball and when I did get my hands on the basketball they would knock it out of my hands. My Uncle Steve pulled into the driveway and took a few minutes to see what was going on. My Uncle Steve ran out of his car to grab the rebound, hand the ball to me, and then put me on his shoulders so I could sink the basketball. Then he looked at my brothers and told them not to pick on me because they would not like if someone bigger than them was picking on them. My

COPY

Uncle Steve has always had my back. For a few years now I have had a hard time trying to figure out what I should major in, I was originally going to be an accountant because I enjoy numbers. My Uncle Steve told me he never saw me sitting behind a desk, that I would not be passionate about a job in accounting. Then proceeded to tell me how he always saw me working with animals because him and I have that same type of need to care for something helpless and that I have that gentle handle that is required to work with animals. Now I am getting into the veterinary program but also looking into being a park ranger. I cannot imagine not having my Uncle Steve in my life just because I have always been able to get his honest opinion on my choices and he's been like a guardian angel to be always looking out for my best interest.

I believe in the justice system and that illegal actions require punishment because that is how a person learns from their mistake. This is my Uncle Steve's first offence and he knows that his inappropriate actions leading up to and taken on September 5th broke several laws. I ask the court for leniency when sentencing my Uncle Steve because the man that committed these crimes is not the man that his family, friends, and community know him as. The mistakes he made do not define who he is, and my Uncle Steve's faith allows him to know that in the end he will be judged for his actions. If you decide that my Uncle Steve deserves to be incarcerated, I believe that he will make the best out of the situation and knowing him, he will influence the people he is surrounded by in jail the same way he has influenced the people in his life to be the best they can be. Thank you Judge Richard Reinbold for considering my request for leniency on my Uncle Steve's case and I do know that you will take the right course of action under the judicial system.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Courtney Bittel', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Courtney Bittel

April 7, 2015

Judge Richard Reinbold  
Summit County Courthouse  
205 South High Street  
Akron, Ohio 44308

To the Honorable Judge Richard Reinbold,

My name is Barbara Bittel. I am the sister-in-law and longtime friend of Steven Bittel. I have known Steve for approximately 42 years (since we were children). Our families lived on the same street in Cleveland, Ohio and we grew up playing baseball, kick ball, tennis, football, etc. I eventually ended up marrying Steve's older brother Robert and we have five children.

You most likely receive many requests for leniency from families and friends of those whom you are about to sentence. I want you to know a little bit about Steve. Steve is physically a large person. This can make him appear intimidating; however, Steve has the heart of a teddy bear. He is very committed to his family and friends and has always been the first one there if you needed help (most times before you ever asked).

When Steve and his wife Patty were first dating, Patty was diagnosed with ovarian cancer. She was a freshman in college and in her late teens. Patty and Steve had just started dating. Steve had no real commitment to Patty yet. He could have walked away, but he didn't. Patty ended up having several surgeries, going through chemotherapy treatments, losing her hair and temporarily leaving college. Steve stayed by her side. Steve would travel to Akron University after work every weekend to bring Patty home to her parents' house or visit her at the University. He was with her for every surgery and every ugly side effect of chemotherapy. He made sure that she finished college and received her degree. Steve knew that Patty would never be able to have children (which he wanted very much) and accepted that fact without questioning. He and Patty eventually married.

Steve has been a generous and committed uncle to my five children. He is the kind of uncle that my children respect and appreciate for his love, frankness, kindness and wisdom. Steve has been selected by my three sons to be their confirmation sponsor and Patty has been selected by my two daughters. I left the decision to each child to make on their own. There was no question in their minds who they would select. Steve has demonstrated to my children how to be a compassionate Christian servant of God. Through his love and actions he has been and still is a fantastic role model for my children and grandchild.

When my second born son became very ill three years ago, and had to eventually have 3 surgeries and his entire colon removed, Steve was right there. Steve stayed all day at the hospital with us through each surgery. Steve said prayers before and during the surgery for him. As my son was recovering Steve would come over just to talk to him and visit. Steve knew he could not change this outcome for my son, but was ready to help him appreciate the future.

Steve has always shown good judgment and character. He was the Chief Financial Officer for several large companies all at the same time which demanded much time and responsibility of him. He was trusted with the finances of these companies. He rose to the challenge and kept those companies financially solvent. He is a very dedicated and passionate person.

Steve does not say one thing and do another. For all the years that I have known Steve he has demonstrated a degree of integrity that I wish I could mirror. Steve has held positions of trust and respect in his church, community and business world. There has never been a time until now that his actions or integrity were in question. Steve lives his faith as a devoted catholic daily. He treats others with respect and dignity. He tries to make you see all sides of a situation before making a decision. Steve does not judge you. He does however, make you aware of what the bible says and that eventually we will all be judged, so what we do today is very important to our salvation. By just knowing him, he makes me want to be a better person.

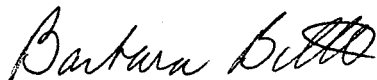
Steve is a loyal friend. He is very knowledgeable and handy with construction, renovations and home improvements. He can usually be found on his days off from work helping out friends or family with an indoor or outdoor home improvement project. He is the first to volunteer to help and the last one to leave. When Steve and Patty built their home in Sagamore Hills, it was Steve who made sure there would be room for both his and Patty's parents as they aged. He even planned ahead to make sure there was structure in place for an elevator/lift if this would be needed for their parents in the future.

As you can see the actions for which Steve is standing trial are so out of character for him. He deeply regrets the mistakes he has made. He has a very strong support system of his wife, family and friends. He has never been in a situation like this before. He accepts full responsibility for the criminal offenses he has committed. He has been very respectful of the court and has followed all the restrictions imposed. He has stated that he will continue counseling even if not court ordered, due to the benefit he has received in understanding his actions.

I ask that you show leniency to Steve as you sentence him on April 22, 2015. I ask that the sentence be appropriate for the crimes committed. Steve is not a threat to himself or society. The actions he demonstrated on September 5, 2014 were panic induced. Through counseling he has dealt with some of the issues that were responsible for the events and crimes committed. With further counseling he will continue to deal with these issues. Therefore, I do not see how prolonged incarceration would be of benefit to anyone. Helping in some capacity the Summit County Police and Sherriff Departments or the Crimes Against Children Task Force to help make society a safer place for all would be a more constructive way for Steve to serve his punishment and be of benefit to society.

You do not know me, nor do you owe neither me nor Steve anything. I have faith that you will consider a fair course of action and I ask that you be as lenient as possible in delivering your sentence. May you find mercy in your heart.

Respectfully,



Barbara Bittel  
29307 Hastings Dr.  
North Olmsted, Ohio 44070  
440-225-3558

April 6<sup>th</sup> 2015

To

Judge Richard Reinbold

My name is Marilyn Jindra and Steve is my Son-In-Law. I have known him for over 30 years. From the first time I met Steve he was very easy to talk to and very friendly. I like that he looked into your eyes when he spoke to you. Not too many young men do that. He was neat, but told us he was not afraid to get dirty repairing things around the house and loved to work in the yard & garden. Always willing to help others.

When he found out that new neighbors were moving in across the street, he went over to shovel the snow out of the driveway so the truck would be able to get in.

He spent hours weeding the Church grounds with out help, or once in a while someone would help for an hour.

Steve also did readings in the Church on Sunday once a month or so. Also for family wedding + even funerals, and always prayed before meals.

He was loyal to my Daughter even after we found out she had cancer, they were just dating at the time + he could of walked away, but he stayed with her + never gave it a thought of leaving her.

He painted my walls + build a deck for me. Every time someone needed help, he was there to lend a helping hand. That's just a few things that he did.

I know Steve is truly sorry for what he

did and I do hope from the bottom of my heart that the court would show leniency in sentencing Steve as I know his wife + Family need him & count on him. I'm sure he could do more good outside of jail than he could inside. I hope this letter can help you see that Steve is really a good person & that leniency would be greatly appreciated.

Thank You

Sincerely  
Marilyn Jindra  
10384 Rock Ledge Way  
North Royalton, Ohio 44133  
440-230-0440

COPY

Kane Kapustik  
3095 Killingworth Lane  
Twinsburg, OH 44087  
330.998.4680  
11APR15

The Honorable Judge Richard Reinbold,

I write this letter with a heavy heart, for my Uncle Steve Bittle. To describe my uncle, I would say he is a hard working role model, who puts God, family and friends on the top of his priority list.

Uncle Steve has always been there for me as his nephew. He showed me how to work hard and proved it's possible through his actions such as working and going to school full time. What I admire is he would challenge me intellectually as a 10 year old kid, by talking about politics, foreign policy, and my career and act as if I were an adult. To get me to think he would play devil's advocate so I would see both sides and have a well rounded knowledge about a subject. I still remember talking about 9/11 when I was in grade school and wondering how I could help. What stuck with me is there is always something you can do, no matter how small it seems at the time. A few years later I joined the Air Force and served for 6 years and was a part of Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan. He also gave us hope to not give up on our dreams. Recently I became an Airline Pilot, my dream job as a kid. My family influenced me to become what I am today, and I give a lot of that credit to my Uncle Steve.

I would like to stress that my Uncle Steve has never had inappropriate behavior with me, I cannot stress that enough. As a 26 year old adult, I don't see that prison as a way to rehabilitate someone who already has such remorse for something he knows is wrong. I see a different man, full of regret, because of this I ask for your leniency.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kane Kapustik', written in a cursive style.

Kane Kapustik



John & Kim Kapustik  
3095 Killingworth Ln.  
Twinsburg, OH. 44087  
330-425-2948

April 12, 2015

Honorable Judge Richard Reinbold,

We are John and Kim Kapustik. Steve Bittel is our Brother-in-Law for just over 30 years now.

We felt compelled to write to you Judge Richard Reinbold as we want you to know the real Steve Bittel. Not the person he has been portrayed by the media and police that were present that day.

Steve is not just a brother-in law. He is a true part of our family.

When we called Steve shortly after his arrival home, he broke down on the phone not being able to speak. The only words he could get out were "I am so sorry; I don't deserve your family". We told him to listen; "We continue to love you and support you, not the deed. We all make mistakes in life and the hardest part will be for you to forgive yourself. We have already forgiven you because we know who you are and the value you bring to us, our family and your friends." It was easy to forgive as Steve has been there for us and our family in so many ways.

You see Judge Reinbold, to know the real Steve imagine a person who gives of himself to others, expecting nothing in return. You just ask, and he is there whether it is for moral support or you need something done. He even went to Florida when a friend said he was putting on a roof. Steve flew out right away to help. He finished a basement for his neighbor when he should have been working on his own finished basement. Organized and took on role of chairperson for many church fund raising events. He is a good husband, uncle to many, and friend. Can't imagine a time when he was not the first in line to be by our side to talk through our job challenges, taking care of aging parents, or be there for our two boys' ages now 26 and 30.

When he dated Patty, his wife, he was with her through every step of her Chemo and Radiation treatments, never leaving her side. They were just turning 20 when she was diagnosed and had to have a hysterectomy, leaving her sterile. But, that was not enough to scare him away. He stuck by her side until she was in remission. Then they married.

Steve was a great uncle and role model to our two boys from the day they were born to present. When the incident happened on September 5, 2014 we had a family discussion. We asked the boys if Uncle Steve ever touched them or photographed them inappropriately. They both gave us an adamant "NO". The boys recalled all the great football games they had in the front yard on holiday gatherings. Steve took a real interest in their lives, not just casual conversation, but conversations about school, how to handle situations that came up at school, and their famous RISK board game tournaments. He was an educator to them describing each country and strategy of the game. As the boys grew older into teens, Steve talked careers, life lessons, and politics which were their favorite. When they asked him why he wanted to run for school board since he had no children...his answer was from the heart. He let them know you just don't stand by and watch things not happen. You get involved. Not having children had nothing to do with helping the community solve problems that others have not. He felt strong that getting involved with his finance degree and business experience he could help the school board become strong and make good sound decisions for the community schools. That was a very real moment for us all. This was a real life lesson. Standing up for something you believe in not complaining from the side lines. (By the way, Steve worked full time as a window installer and went to college fulltime finishing college in just years. Many nights just getting 4-5 hrs of sleep a night.) These are just a few examples of why it was natural for Steve to teach. We remember one day all sitting around the holiday table and his 9 nephews around him talking finance. He was

surprised how little at high school level the boys knew about finances. The adults all said this should be taught in Grade School. Steve went to St. Barnabas and volunteered to put a finance class together for the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders. As you can see, Steve saw a need and went to work to put a program together so other students didn't sound like his nephews who did not know about stocks, bonds, financial growth. Steve is a problem solver.

With a heavy heart I have to say, the media was more responsible for inducing fear and panic to the public by inferring someone on the school board could be interacting with children. The school board is made up of adults who meet in the evening. Children are never present. There is no correlation between the two. Yet the media had you thinking he was on the board to entice children. Any adult should know better than that. Shame on the media! Steve's intention was never to interact with children of the public school system, but again trying to come from contribution and solving a problem collectively with the school board members.

Steve is Human...humans make mistakes when they feel backed in a corner. He was trying to deal with an addiction we later found out, an addiction which there are no support groups or agencies to get help. He was trying to deal with it alone. There is AA for Alcoholics, Rehab Centers for drug addicts, Homeless Shelters for those who have lost everything. But, there are no advertised or readily known help for people addicted to porn. As Jesus teaches, he without sin...cast the first stone. We do not feel Steve is a threat to anyone or we would have never allowed him to come home to our sister Patty.

We believe Steve's intentions were to hurt no one. Once his addiction was discovered, he felt shame and truly thought no one would be able to forgive him. He panicked. Which caused him to make a very poor decision when the officers arrived at his home. I think that goes back to human nature.

We want to leave you with the Best way to describe Steve:

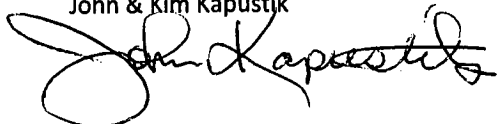
Giving, Passionate, Caring, Outspoken, and a man of deep Faith, Putting others before himself, Great Uncle to his nephews and nieces, great brother and brother-in law. For all he does for so many people.

It would be difficult to see so many people not having Steve there for them. He makes a difference in every life he touches. If he were not such a good person, then few would have rallied to his side.

We can honestly say, we have never seen such a broken man as the weeks after his arrest. We have never witnessed a person with such remorse for his actions. The incident has humbled Steve as he has had to explain to each of us what happened and why it happened. The therapy has helped him understand deep rooted issues that may have caused the addiction. Sometimes God puts challenges in front of you to make you stronger.

We ask that you give Steve Bittel leniency as he has never been in trouble with the law before. He is not a violent person that would hurt anyone. Prison is meant to reform people who are violent and have a tendency to hurt other people. Since Steve's arrest, he was finally able to confront his pornography addiction. Steve is not the typical offender you see in prison. No Violence, Drug, Alcohol and never has touched a child in an inappropriate way. We do not feel by putting Steve away from society will be a benefit to either Steve or the general population. Judge Richard Reinbold, we hope you would consider something more appropriate that would be able to utilize Steve's education and experience in an innovated way to help other people. Perhaps working with others to help put into legislation a way to get people help with this type of addiction seems more productive. God be with you as you make a very difficult decision as to the best way justice is to be served.

*Kim Marie Kapustik*  
John & Kim Kapustik



John Andrew Kapustik  
518 Apple Valley Circle  
Delaware, Ohio 43015  
Phone: 216-536-7308

April 11, 2015

Judge Richard Reinbold  
Summit County Courthouse  
205 South High Street  
Akron, Ohio 44308  
3rd Floor - Judge Rowlands courtroom

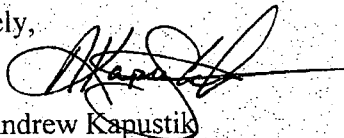
Dear Judge Reinbold,

My name is Andy Kapustik and Steve Bittel is my uncle. My intentions of this letter is to give you some insight of who my Uncle Steve is and what he means to me.

I am 30 years old and have known Uncle Steve my entire life. Uncle Steve has always played an active role in our family while growing up. I can't remember a birthday, Christmas, graduation, or any other family event that Uncle Steve was not present at. Not only was Uncle Steve present at these events, but he was always the uncle that was involved with his nephews. He would sit and talk with us about school, work, and everything going on with our lives and provide insight and guidance to help us both personally and professionally. Uncle Steve worked hard to be successful professionally and I consulted with him for advice on work related issues and even a career change. I value his opinions and advice while he has served as a positive role model and made a positive impact in my life. Uncle Steve was always the first uncle to pick up the football and gather everyone outside for a pick up game. Uncle Steve is much more than just another uncle at a family event. Uncle Steve is very involved with the family and he means a considerable amount to all of us.

Uncle Steve has a kind heart and does a lot of good in this world through volunteering and being a mentor in so many peoples lives. I ask the court to show leniency in sentencing because he is a good person who made a terrible mistake and made some bad decisions. I want you to know that I sincerely believe the mistakes Uncle Steve has made are absolutely in no way an accurate reflection of his true character. Uncle Steve has never made any inappropriate gestures toward me personally as a preteen, teen, or as an adult or anyone I know. Uncle Steve never showed me pornography or ever spoke of it. I believe that Uncle Steve is a very productive member of society and it would be a deep loss to have him somewhere where he could not be free to do the world good with his talents.

Sincerely,



John Andrew Kapustik