

North American Old Catholic Church

---

Office of the Presiding Archbishop

June 10, 2008

Governor Timothy Kaine  
The Commonwealth of Virginia  
Patrick Henry Building, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor  
1111 East Broad Street  
Richmond, VA 23219

Dear Governor Kaine:

I am writing to you today to applaud your decision to commute the death sentence of Percy Walton to a sentence of life imprisonment. The compassion you have displayed in this act is a credit to your administration, and to the residents of the great Commonwealth of Virginia.

There are many Americans who suffer from mental illness. Many times, these illnesses are treatable, and those who suffer mental diseases lead productive lives as upstanding Americans.

While mental illness should never be used an excuse for committing any crime, least of all homicide, it most certainly should be considered a mitigating factor when considering sentencing and the commutation of sentences such as the one levied against Mr. Walton.

Considering Mr. Walton's schizophrenia is treatable with counseling and medication, you have to wonder if easier access to mental health care would have prevented the senseless murder of his neighbors in Danville in 1996, as well as the tragedy at Virginia Tech just over one year ago.

Your term as governor of Virginia has already established itself as historic. Please Governor, continue your legacy as a governor for historic change by introducing legislation to make access to mental health care for all Virginians free and easily obtainable; and reform the sentencing guidelines used by the court system so that they prohibit the death penalty being applied in cases where mental illness is a mitigating factor.

With an assurance of prayers for you, Anne, your children, and all the residents of the Commonwealth, I remain...

Yours in justice and freedom,

The Most Reverend Michael V. Seneco, SPSA, DD, L.Th.  
Presiding Archbishop