

# The Legislature of Rockland County



**ARON B. WIEDER**  
**Legislator - District 13**

Chair, Public Safety Committee  
Vice Chair, Budget & Finance Committee  
Vice Chair, Planning & Public Works Committee  
Multi-Services Committee  
Member, Rockland County Solid Waste Management Authority

March 16, 2020

The Honorable Donald J. Trump  
President of the United States  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue  
Washington, DC 20500

Re: Sholam Weiss

Dear Mr. President:

With the greatest respect, I request that you consider commuting Sholam Weiss's sentence to time served. Mr. Weiss was convicted on November 1, 1999 in the United States District Court for the Middle District of Florida on 76 counts and was sentenced on February 15, 2000 to an excessive 845 years prison sentence. Mr. Weiss, whose primary conviction was a non-violent white-collar crime of wire fraud and money laundering, has already served over 20 years of his sentence.

Mr. Weiss's sentence is egregiously excessive and disproportionate to other white-collar sentences imposed. Taking into consideration the worst white-collar crimes in American history, never has a sentence like this been handed down. The two highest sentences ever imposed for a white-collar crime were issued in this case - Mr. Weiss received a sentence of 845 years, and co-defendant Keith Pound received a sentence of 740 years and died in prison in 2003.

For the first 10 years of his prison sentence Mr. Weiss was held in a maximum-security facility in Ocala Florida, secluded from society. Had Mr. Weiss been re-sentenced under today's applicable sentencing guidelines, he would be a free man.

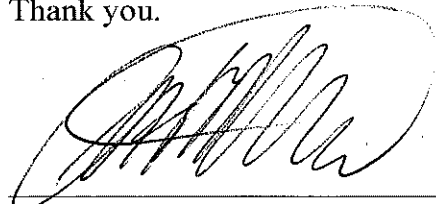
Under today's sentencing guidelines, Mr. Weiss's sentence would range between 30-37 months<sup>1</sup>. The sentencing guidelines have been amended a few times since Mr. Weiss's incarceration (it was amended in 2001, 2003 and again in 2015), but was not applied in Mr. Weiss's case since the amendments could not be retroactively applied. The changes in the sentencing guidelines are extremely significant. The new guideline range for the same criminal offense and circumstances would have given Mr. Weiss 30-37 months in prison term as opposed to 845 years (10,140 months). Mr. Weiss has been imprisoned more than 275 times the current guidelines range.

All restitution required of Mr. Weiss has been paid in full. Mr. Weiss has demonstrated exceptionally good conduct throughout his incarceration. Mr. Weiss has been a model inmate, serving as a Rabbi to other Jewish inmates for the past 15 years, teaching the culture and background of the Jewish religion, and providing spiritual guidance and uplifting where needed. Mr. Weiss's prison record demonstrates that he has always helped others in need and has devoted himself to rehabilitative and religious activities while incarcerated. In summary, Mr. Weiss's behavior throughout his lengthy incarceration has demonstrated that, from both a retributive and rehabilitative perspective, the objectives and purposes of his sentence have been successfully served.

Mr. Weiss is 65 years old, a father of five, a grandfather of 33, and a great grandfather of 2 – all of whom are eager to see him come home. Mr. Weiss's health has deteriorated in prison, and he suffers from colon cancer, cardio-vascular disease, and other ailments.

I fully support a commutation for Mr. Weiss and hope that Mr. Weiss will soon be reunited with his family.

Thank you.



LEGISLATOR ARON B. WIEDER  
District 13

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<sup>1</sup> Please see attached Neiman & Mairanz P.C. sentencing opinion letter as well as support letters from Alan Dershowitz and Jay Sekulow.