

HELP FREE PAUL PETERSEN BY FEBRUARY 2027

*Support Paul's pardon,
commutation, and clemency effort.*



Pictured here: Paul with his children while he was in federal prison in Big Spring, Texas in 2022.

Respected Leaders Speak Out



Tyler Montague

Arizona Political Strategist & Public Policy Advocate

“I agree that Paul Petersen has paid enough for his mistakes and was treated very differently than others doing the exact same thing. State and federal agencies were involved in these adoptions. Think about that for a moment.”



Cecil Ash

Former Arizona State Representative, Former Local Judge & Attorney

“Paul’s case was so unjust. I cringe to read about it. That this could happen in America means none of us is really safe from an unfair, politically motivated prosecution.

The solution, from a taxpayer’s perspective, should have been an injunction to stop Paul from what he was doing, not incarceration.”



Tom Freestone

Tom Freestone, a longtime respected politician in Arizona who served as a judge, in the Arizona Legislature, and for 10 years on the Pardon and Parole Board, later known as the Board of Executive Clemency, told The Arizona Sun Times that Petersen, who has no prior criminal history, is a “safe release” and should not remain imprisoned.

“This really is where he ought to be, with family. He is intelligent, and a lot of degrees, and he lost a lot in this. And there comes a time when we need to take and let him become a good citizen, begin and help him for that, in that end. I think they should have probably put him on probation. He has a good family, a good safety net.”



Ken Smith *Attorney & Former Judge Pro Tem*

“I have known Paul for many years. In fact, he even worked for my law firm for a while. I have been practicing law in Az for over 40 years. I am a fifth-generation citizen of Mesa. I have served as a Judge Pro Tem for over 15 years. I also serve as the Honorary Consul de Chile. I have followed Paul’s case. In my humble opinion, his punishment far exceeds the harm his crimes caused. In fact, his post conviction treatment has been a miscarriage of justice. It shocks the conscience of fair-minded people like me. It is time to make things right. It is time to show some real mercy and do some real justice. Time for Paul to return to his family.”



Mel McDonald

Former United States Attorney and Superior Court Judge

A Legal Perspective:

“I only want to say that there is no conceivable justification in my mind for either Federal and State prosecutions and for the outrageous sentences that were imposed on this wonderful human being.”

Mel McDonald served as a United States Attorney after being appointed by President Ronald Reagan.



Danny White

Former ASU and Dallas Cowboys Quarterback | Native Arizonan

“As a proud Arizonan, former Dallas Cowboys quarterback, and longtime Mesa resident, I am writing to respectfully urge you to grant a full pardon to Paul Petersen.

I have followed Paul’s case closely through detailed reporting that highlights the full context of his actions. What prosecutors portrayed as a profit-driven scheme was, at its core, an effort to help Marshallese women facing difficult circumstances find loving homes for their children through adoption.

Paul navigated complex and outdated federal compacts while providing medical care, support, and opportunities that benefited both the birth mothers and adoptive families. He fully repaid every dollar of restitution to the state, demonstrated accountability, and maintained a strong record as a public servant and family man prior to these events.”

“The sentences—federal time already served plus additional consecutive state time—appear disproportionate, especially when viewed against the humanitarian intent and the technical nature of the violations involving an archaic agreement with the Marshall Islands.

Paul has paid a heavy price, been separated from his children, and learned from the experience.

A Growing List of Supporters

Paul Petersen's request for clemency has also received support from respected leaders and public servants, including:

- Donna Kafer, Arizona Legislative Chaplain
- Trent Franks, Former United States Congressman
- Jim Buster, Former Mayor of Yuma and Former Arizona State Senator
- Ed Ableser, Former Arizona State Senator and State Representative

More people have shared their personal experiences with Paul and their reasons for supporting his request for clemency.

[View More Supporter Voices](#) →

Why February 2027 Matters

- February 2027 is Paul Petersen's first and only opportunity to seek commutation of his Arizona prison sentence.
- A commutation would free Paul from prison in Globe, Arizona and allow him to come home to his children and family.
- Under Arizona rules, Paul must be incarcerated for two years before requesting commutation. By February 2027, that requirement will be met.

**IF PAUL'S COMMUTATION IS NOT APPROVED AT THIS TIME, HE WILL
REMAIN IN ARIZONA PRISON UNTIL DECEMBER 2028.**

What Had Paul Been Doing for Over 20 Years

Paul worked as an adoption lawyer for more than 20 years, facilitating up to 500 open adoptions across Arizona, Utah, and Arkansas.

All adoptive parents were screened and approved by court standards, and the adoptions were approved by Superior Court Judges in Arkansas, Arizona, and Utah.



Adoptive parents must meet specific requirements for financial stability, proof of comprehensive health insurance, and the emotional temperament to add a new baby into the family.

In 20 years, no complaints were made against Paul's adoption services.

Emergency Medicaid Context

Federal Emergency Medicaid in law since 1996 and still the same today in 2026.

“Federal Emergency Medicaid only covers hospital emergency charges including childbirth, regardless of immigration status.”
— Federal government website

- Only hospitals can bill Federal Emergency Medicaid for reimbursement.
- Both the mother and newborn baby are not on regular AHCCCS after release from the hospital. This is an Emergency Medicaid benefit for in-hospital care only.
- Under adoption laws, any future medical services for the child would be paid by the adoptive parents' insurance.

More context on next slide →

Paul stated:

“I had no role in billing for any medical expenses, nor did I EVER receive any Medicaid funds. All claims were paid directly to the hospital.”

This Has Been Federal Policy Since 1996

David Petersen personally witnessed this issue while serving as Vice Chairman of the Arizona Senate Health Services Committee.

In a 1998 hearing, Tucson hospitals near the Arizona-Mexico border testified that Emergency Medicaid requirements were overwhelming emergency services, including childbirth care for non-citizens.

Hospital representatives explained that local emergency services were being disrupted and that closing emergency rooms was their only viable option.

**PAUL DID NOT
CREATE THIS
SYSTEM.**

Emergency Medicaid ends at hospital release.

**Mother and newborn are not on regular AHCCCS
afterward.**

THE BILLING PROCESS FOLLOWED SINCE 1996, INCLUDING TODAY IN 2026



FEDERAL EMERGENCY MEDICAID COVERS HOSPITAL EMERGENCY SERVICES ONLY. IT IS AN IN-HOSPITAL BENEFIT.

Adoptive Parent Insurance Facts

After adoption is approved, adoptive parents' insurance is required by law to cover the child's medical costs, just as it would for any other child or sibling in the family.

This includes hospital expenses at birth and future medical expenses.

Paul stated:

“I had no role in billing for any medical expenses, nor did I ever receive any Medicaid funds. All claims were paid directly to the hospital that provided the services.”

Unequal Treatment Across States

The principle of Equal Justice under the law was ignored in Paul's situation. *Why?*

An adoption attorney in Hawaii operated the same way Paul did for more years than Paul did. She was never charged with any crimes but was allowed to quietly close down her practice.



Arkansas **DID NOT**
charge Paul with
Medicaid fraud.

Utah **DID NOT**
charge Paul with
Medicaid fraud.

ONLY ARIZONA charged Paul with
Medicaid/AHCCCS fraud, even though
AHCCCS is funded largely through the same
federal Medicaid structure.

Paul stated:

“I am the only person ever prosecuted for this situation in the State of Arizona or in any other state of the United States.”

Over 80 Felony Charges

From the beginning, supporters viewed the number of charges and the \$500,000 cash bond as signs of prosecutorial overreach.

Paul was a sitting resident and elected official with a home and office. He was not in hiding.

There were no identified victims and no prior complaints from birth mothers or adoptive parents.

**THIS RAISED SERIOUS QUESTIONS ABOUT WHETHER THE
RESPONSE WAS PROPORTIONAL.**

Paul's Significant Costs

Paul faced charges across three jurisdictions: Arkansas federal charges, Utah state charges, and Arizona state charges.

Costs include:

- \$580,000 for hiring two lawyers, one in Arizona and one in Utah
- \$780,000 paid by Paul from his half of the marital assets directly to the State of Arizona
- \$400 to \$500 per month in ongoing prison costs, paid by Paul's immediate family with help from friends

The result: Paul is penniless.

What Will the Commutation Effort Cost?

- Estimated legal fees: \$10,000
- Estimated social media and outreach costs to gather support for Paul's commutation: \$70,000

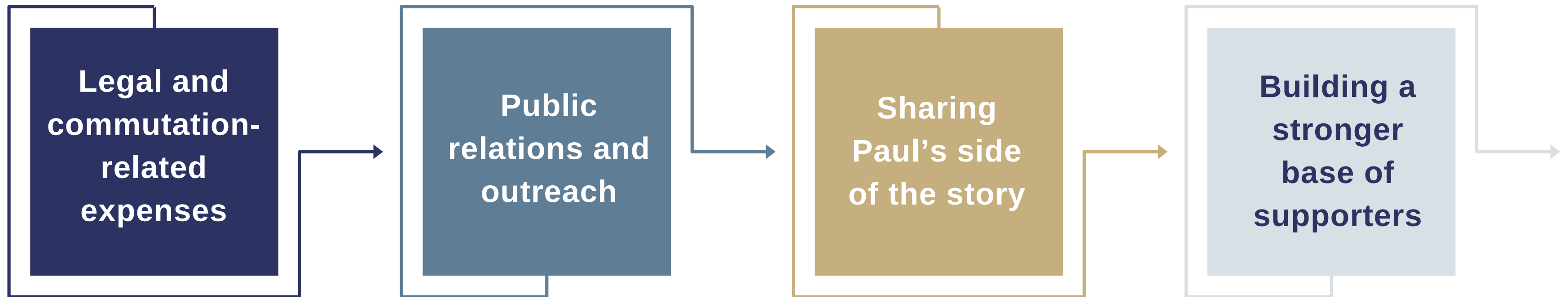
These efforts are focused on building public support leading up to February 2027.

David and Patti Petersen have personally donated \$20,000 to date to help tell Paul's side of the story and generate support for the commutation effort.

How You Can Help

Paul's family and supporters are working to build the awareness, resources, and public support needed before his February 2027 commutation opportunity.

Your support will help with:



Our goal is to have 500 supporters by February 2027

Help build the awareness, resources, and public support needed before Paul's commutation opportunity.

Support the Clemency Effort

Free Prisoners Unjustly Imprisoned in Arizona Inc. is a nonprofit organization supporting public education, outreach, and advocacy related to clemency efforts.

DONATE ONLINE:

Make a secure online contribution at:
FreePaulPetersen.com/Donate

Donors will receive a receipt after completing their contribution.

CHECK PAYABLE TO:

Free Prisoners Unjustly
Imprisoned in Arizona Inc.

Mailing address: 623 N Miller
Street, Mesa, AZ 85203

Thank You

We will keep you informed monthly on the status of this effort.

Please share this update, invite others to follow along, and help build support before February 2027.

Together, we can support Paul's commutation effort and help bring him home.

Please Support Paul's Commutation Effort

David and Patti Petersen

Learn more and follow updates:

FreePaulPetersen.com