

Office of the White House Press Secretary
(Vail, Colorado)

THE WHITE HOUSE

STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT

I have signed pardons under the clemency program for 18 civilians who have never served in uniform -- nine of these effective immediately, and nine of them conditional upon the recipients earning their way back into society by alternate service. In addition, I have formally approved the Board's recommendations for clemency for 29 former servicemen, including 26 whose pardons will be conditional on their completing alternate service.

These former servicemen still have available to them military appellate mechanisms for review of their earlier convictions. Since I do not intend to impair or prejudice their access to that legal process, I have not signed the formal instruments of clemency at this time. I will not do so until and unless the convictions will have become final, and the resulting punitive and undesirable discharges will have been executed.

Each of these cases involves an individual -- a judgment of his past and a determination of his future. The responsibility in each decision is a grave one. The Board and I have carefully considered each case on its individual merits. I believe we have acted with both justice and mercy.

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