



222 Rutherford Street, Greenville, South Carolina 29609 | (864) 546-5089 | southcarolina@rootandrebound.org

## **South Carolina Pardon Information**

Many convictions may not be eligible for expungement, but there is a different option. A *pardon* is the State's forgiveness of a person for all the legal consequences of a crime. The conviction WILL still show up on your criminal record, but it will be marked as "pardoned."

There are certain rights that can only be restored through the pardon process (those rights will NOT be restored through the expungement process), such as your right to own and possess a firearm. If you have questions regarding the restoration of certain rights, you should speak with a lawyer.

To be eligible, you must have finished your sentence, including completion of probation or parole, and have no new arrests or convictions for a significant period – we generally recommend five (5) years. All fines and fees (including restitution) must be paid in full.

### *Pardon Process:*

- No attorney is necessary, but you may hire one if you prefer.
- Complete the pardon application available from the South Carolina Department of Probation, Parole, and Pardon Services (SC DPPP) at <http://www.dppps.sc.gov>.
- List ALL convictions on the application (including any convictions that do NOT appear on your SLED report).
- Provide three (3) letters of references from people NOT related by blood or marriage (ex. pastor, former employer, co-worker, etc.).
- *Pardon Hearing:*
  - Once you have submitted your application, it takes seven (7) to nine (9) months before you will have a hearing.
  - You will receive notice one (1) month in advance of the hearing before the pardon board. That notice will include additional instructions, so read it carefully.
  - Attending the hearing is optional, but we would strongly advise that you attend the hearing, either in person or virtually.
  - You may bring three (3) witnesses to testify on your behalf that CAN be related to you by blood or marriage.
- The burden of proof is on YOU to show that you are a changed person. Be prepared to provide documentation showing steps you have taken to do so.



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**LETTER TEMPLATE:** This template does not have to be followed exactly, **except for the highlighted portions**. It is just a recommended list of writing points. Each reference should write in a formal and professional manner, but still from the heart.

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**Date [letters must be dated within six (6) months of application submission]**

**Reference name**  
**Street address**  
**City, State Zip Code**  
**Phone number**

Dear State Board of Pardons and Paroles,

First paragraph – Introduction

- **State that you are in favor of a pardon for the applicant! Include the word “pardon.”**
- Introduce yourself (ex. personal history, employment, involvement in community activities).
- State how you met/know the applicant.

Second paragraph – Persuasion

- State specific examples of the applicant’s good will, rehabilitation, work ethic, community service, responsibilities, employment, or anything else that will reflect upon the applicant’s good character.
- Describe applicant’s change from past to present (if you knew them at the time of the charges)

Third paragraph – Conclusion

- State why the applicant wants a pardon and why you think they should get a pardon.
- State how a pardon will positively affect the applicant, their family, and their community.

Sincerely,

**[Letter must be signed by reference]**

Reference name