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## Gov. Nixon Grants Seven Pardons

AUGUST 22ND 2016 BY DEE LOFLIN

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**Jefferson City, Missouri - Gov. Jay Nixon** today announced that he has granted pardons to six men and one woman, each of whom has completed his or her sentence and has become a law-abiding citizen.

“The executive power to grant clemency is one I take with a great deal of consideration and seriousness,” **Gov. Nixon** said. “In each of these cases warranting a pardon, the individual has demonstrated the ability and willingness to be a contributing member of society.”

Those granted pardons are:

- Patricia Lane, who was placed on five years’ probation after being convicted in Audrain County in 1988 of two counts of passing bad checks. She received an early discharge from probation and has not been charged with any other crimes. Lane is currently employed by the Missouri Department of Corrections.
- Jackie Vent, who was given a two-year term of probation after being convicted of possession of over 35 grams of marijuana in New Madrid County in 1980. Vent received an early discharge from probation and has not been charged with any other crimes since that time. He has served as a pastor at a church in Tulsa, Okla., for the past 34 years.
- James Hardin, who received a one-year term of unsupervised probation after being convicted of stealing in Jasper County in 2007. He paid restitution for the stolen merchandise and has not been charged with any other crimes since successfully completing probation. Hardin has been gainfully employed since being discharged from probation.
- William Harrison, who pleaded guilty to a charge of passing a bad check in Franklin County in 1993. He paid full restitution and was given a five-year term of probation, which he successfully completed. Harrison was gainfully employed after completing probation and has not been charged with any other crimes.

- Leroy Kerns, who pleaded guilty to unlawful use of drug paraphernalia in Vernon County in 2004. He successfully completed a two-year term of probation and has been gainfully employed since that time.
- Jerry Simpson, who pleaded guilty to stealing in Stoddard County in 1985. Simpson successfully completed a two-year term of probation and has not been charged with any other crimes. He was employed for many years as a maintenance employee.
- Earnest Leap, who entered an Alford plea to a charge of sexual abuse in 1992 in Jackson County. Leap successfully completed a three-year term of probation and has not been charged with any other crime since then. The person named as the victim, who is now an adult, has since told authorities that the incident did not happen.

“In the case of Earnest Leap, the information that has come to light more recently and the fact that he has been a law-abiding and productive member of society were compelling enough for me to grant a pardon,” **Gov. Nixon** said.

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