

To whom it may concern,

This isn't a letter of anger or indignant frustration. I would just like to share with you how the furlough of August 2003 affected my life.

7 years ago in August my family went through one of the biggest challenges of our lives. My parents were divorced and had split custody of my sister and I. Because they both maintained a dwelling of their own, life was a little bit tight. My sisters and I didn't have the advantage of a home with a combined income. Sometimes we wouldn't have enough money to make ends meet and we would have to live with my grandparents for a while. This happened on more than one occasion. Despite the difficulties, we still made things work.

I remember August of '03 vividly. My single mother, my siblings, and I had moved to Piti, because we couldn't afford to live in our old home. I was attending Jose Rios Middle School, which at the time was in a double session with Ocean View Middle School.

When the furlough hit, it dawned on me then how financially sensitive my family's situation was. Both of my parents were teachers so it hurt twice as bad.

I didn't know this at the time, but my mother couldn't eat sometimes because she wanted to give what food we had to my two sisters and I.

It broke my heart to learn of that, to learn just how desperate our lives became.

The next month wasn't much better, we still owed money for a procedure I had when I was younger and the last month's rent was still due. In fact, I can't quite remember how long it took to finally get out of that rut. I do remember, however, the stinging injustice that assaulted my senses every time I thought back to that month. As a young boy I internalized the belief that the government could take whatever they please from even the most desperate of families. I want to believe I was wrong, I really do. But until the teachers of DOE (now GPSS) are paid back in full, there is nothing I can do to change the truth of the situation.

My mother needed that money and starved when they didn't pay her.