

DECLARATION OF JOSEPH DURAN JR.

I, Joseph Duran Jr., declare as follows:

1. I am over 18 years old. I have personal knowledge of the facts set forth in this declaration and, if called to testify, could and would competently testify to them.
2. I am the father of Joseph Duran III; I call him Joe. Joe was born on August 22, 1988, and is now 37 years old. He has been incarcerated in the Solano County jails since August 26, 2022. He is currently detained at Stanton Correctional Facility in Fairfield, California.
3. I currently live in San Bruno, California. I am 60 years old. I am a laborer in a construction union.
4. When Joe was small, he was always at my side. I never sent him to daycare. The one time I tried, he cried and ran back to me, and I could not bear it. I took him with me everywhere. I ran a company at the time and brought him with me to work. When I worked on cars, he wanted to know every step. He was inquisitive, and he wanted to learn everything I knew.
5. In 1993, when Joe was four years old, I was detained in the California state prison system. I served twenty-four years before being released in 2015. During that time, I was detained at several facilities, including Pelican Bay, Mule Creek, Corcoran, Folsom, San Quentin, and Solano State Prison.
6. Because I lived through twenty-four years of incarceration myself, I know what physical contact with family means to an incarcerated person, and I know what its absence does to a family.
7. During my time at Pelican Bay, I had three overnight visits with Joe. His mother brought him to see me. Those visits strengthened our bond immensely; I especially enjoyed watching movies with him and cooking for him during those visits. After the third visit, the facility changed its policy, and I no longer had access to overnight family visits. It felt like the prison had erected a new wall between my son and me.
8. At Mule Creek, I had one contact visit with Joe. At Folsom, I had several contact visits — my parents brought all three of my children there, including Joe. Those visits, where I could hold my son in my arms, helped me maintain my bond with Joe.
9. At Corcoran, I was permitted to see Joe only once, and it was through a glass pane. He was about nine or ten years old. My parents brought him. He sat across the glass from me, and we tried to talk through the phone. It was so heartbreaking that I almost lost it. Joe started crying as soon as he saw me and I couldn't hold him to console him. Having to see my young son and not be able to touch him was excruciating. It was awful to be in the same room as my child, but to still be cut off from him.

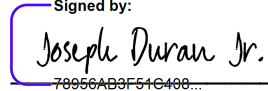
10. The last time I held my son was during a contact visit at Solano State Prison in or around 2003. He was about fifteen years old. Joe is now thirty-seven. I have not been able to have physical contact with him in more than twenty years.
11. Joe and I have not been free at the same time since he was a small child. By the time I was released from prison in 2015, Joe was already incarcerated. Because I was on parole, I was not eligible to visit Joe while he was in state prison. I would drive his mother to the prison so she could visit him, but I would have to wait in the car.
12. Now that he is at Stanton Correctional Facility, the only way I can see my son is by iWebVisit video call. I cannot hold him, hold his hand, sit beside him, or look him in the eye in the same room. The closest I can get to my son is on a screen.
13. Joe and I do video calls every weekend. I have paid iWebVisit for more video calls than I can remember. We also talk on the phone multiple times during the week. We talk about how he is doing inside, his progress, and what is going on with the rest of the family. He often tells me he is proud of how far I have come since my own incarceration. I try to share my life with him through the screen. When I traveled to Memphis, I took Joe through Graceland over video. I try to show him the world when I can—we call it “virtual sightseeing.”
14. These video calls are expensive; I have paid a lot of money to iWebVisit to schedule video calls with Joe. These calls do not replace contact visits. They are limited, insufficient, incomplete, and frustrating. There are things a father wants to do that you cannot do over a screen. I cannot put my hand on his shoulder. I cannot hug him. I cannot sit next to him in silence. When the video call ends, I feel a deep sense of loss that I cannot be with him in person. I have learned, from my own years inside, that physical touch is essential to maintaining love, care, and human connection. Without it, people lose their connection.
15. In my life, I have experienced almost every kind of communication a family can have with someone in custody — overnight visits, contact visits, through-glass, and video calls. Relying on anything other than contact visits really takes something away from the relationship. Through-glass is heartbreaking. Video is even further removed.
16. I have lost two of my other sons. Knowing what it means to lose a child has made me even more aware of how much physical contact with the children I have left matters. Every weekend that I am only able to see Joe through a screen, I am reminded that I have not been able to put my arms around him in more than twenty years.
17. The lack of contact visits has affected me as a father and as a person. When I was incarcerated, the absence of physical contact with my children made me feel less confident as a father. I felt a distance and inadequacy that I could not close from a phone or a letter. I am living that feeling again now, on the other side of the wall, watching my son go through what I went through — and with even less access to contact visits than I had when I was in prison.

18. If Stanton allowed family contact visits, I would visit Joe as often as the facility allowed. I would drive from where I live to Stanton without question. I would do it even for just a single hug.
19. I understand that this case seeks to restore family contact visits at the Solano County jails. I want to be a plaintiff in this case. I have talked with my lawyers about what it means to be a plaintiff in a class action — including that my name and Joe's name may become public, that I may have to testify, and that the case may receive media attention. I want to do this anyway. I want other families to be able to hold their loved ones at Stanton. I have lived this twice now — once as a father inside, and now as a father on the outside. I do not want any other parent or child to have to live it.

I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the State of California that the foregoing is true and correct.

Executed this 16 day of June, 2026, in San Bruno, California.

Signed by:


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Joseph Duran Jr.