

Aide Wrote on Behalf of Prisoner, Gramm Says

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Sen. Phil Gramm (R-Tex.) yesterday contended that an aide had acted independently and without his knowledge when using his name and office in 1979 to help secure the early release of a drug dealer held in federal prison.

Gramm was responding to an article to be published by Mother Jones magazine charging that Gramm, as a representative, had pressed the U.S. Parole Commission to release William Doyle, who was serving an eight-year sentence for operating a methamphetamine laboratory. In the early 1970s, Doyle had served two years in jail on drug-dealing and firearms charges, according to the magazine.

The liberal magazine sought to contrast Gramm's alleged efforts on behalf of Doyle with his public stands on crime, quoting Gramm attacking President Clinton for "overturning minimum mandatory sentences" and

vowing that if elected, "I'm going to put these people [convicted criminals] in jail and keep them there."

Yesterday, Gramm initially issued a statement saying that "since coming to Congress, I have made it a strict policy not to intervene in matters involving pardons or paroles. . . . Until today, I have never heard of Bill Doyle. . . . I have never written or authorized any letter in his behalf."

In addition, Gramm said "violent criminals, especially drug felons, ought to be in prison. . . . I disagree with the general concept of parole and I strongly advocate minimum mandatory sentences."

When editors at Mother Jones produced letters—some carbons without signatures, others copies of originals apparently signed by Gramm or by a machine replicating his signature—Gramm's office released a statement from a former employee, Mary Fae Kamm, taking full responsibility:

"When I was working as a case-

worker in then-Congressman Phil Gramm's office 16 years ago, I was approached by my friend and neighbor, Army Maj. Jim Doyle, for help in assisting his brother. . . . Without authorization or knowledge of Sen. Gramm, I wrote in Sen. Gramm's name to parole authorities expressing the family's concerns and advocating consideration of early release. I handled the entire matter personally and Sen. Gramm was totally unaware of any communications involving this case."

A carbon of an April 16, 1979, letter to Audrey Kaslow, then-director of the U.S. Parole Commission, Western Region, over Gramm's name, contends, "I have reviewed all the existing pre-sentence reports, charges and sentences involving Mr. Doyle over the past 13 years. . . . It appears to me that it would be in the best interests of Mr. Doyle and the community to afford him the opportunity to re-establish himself as a worthwhile, contributing member of society."