

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Public Safety and Security
PAROLE BOARD

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RECORD OF DECISION

IN THE MATTER OF

ALBERTO CARDOZA
W96141

TYPE OF HEARING: Review Hearing

DATE OF HEARING: July 2, 2025

DATE OF DECISION: January 6, 2026

PARTICIPATING BOARD MEMBERS: Edith J. Alexander, Dr. Charlene Bonner, Sarah B. Coughlin, Angelo Gomez, Jr.,¹ James Kelcourse, Rafael Ortiz

VOTE: Parole is granted to a Long-Term Residential Program after a 9 month total step-down to lower security.²

PROCEDURAL HISTORY: On March 15, 2010, after a jury trial in Essex Superior Court, Alberto Cardoza was found guilty of second-degree murder for the death of Jose Ramos, Jr. He was sentenced to life in prison with the possibility of parole. On that same date, he received a concurrent 4 to 5 year sentence for possession of a firearm without a license. Parole was denied following an initial hearing in 2022.

On July 2, 2025, Mr. Cardoza appeared before the Board for a review hearing. He did not have legal representation. The Board's decision fully incorporates by reference the entire video recording of Mr. Cardoza's July 2, 2025, hearing.

STATEMENT OF THE CASE: On the evening of August 15, 2007, Alberto Cardoza (age 19) murdered 18-year-old Jose Ramos in Lawrence. That evening, Mr. Ramos and a friend went to a park to play basketball. There was a game in progress, so the two young men sat on a bench courtside to wait their turn. A group of young men, including Mr. Cardoza, had a brief argument

¹ Board Member Gomez was not present for the hearing, but reviewed the video recording of the hearing and the entirety of the file prior to vote. Board Member Coleman participated in the hearing, but departed the Board prior to vote.

² One Board Member vote to deny parole with a review hearing in 1 year.

with Mr. Ramos and his friend as the group were leaving the park. When the argument ended, the group of young men told Mr. Ramos and his friend that they would "be back."

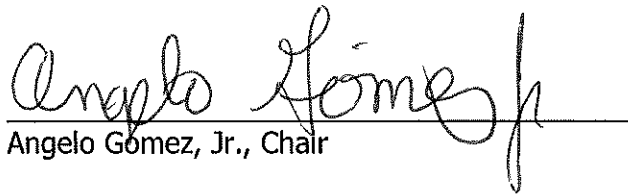
Concerned by this exchange, Mr. Ramos and his friend retrieved a miniature baseball bat from the trunk of their car, which Mr. Ramos held when they returned to the bench. A few minutes later, Mr. Cardoza and his group of young men returned to the basketball court, stopped the game, and challenged Mr. Ramos and his friend to a fight. The group told Mr. Ramos to drop the bat, but he refused. One member in Mr. Cardoza's group then drew a .22 caliber revolver and waved it in a threatening fashion, while the rest of the group encouraged him to shoot Mr. Ramos. Mr. Cardoza, who had been telling Mr. Ramos to drop the bat and fight one-on-one, then grabbed the revolver and fired several shots. One of the shots struck Mr. Ramos above the eye, killing him.

APPLICABLE STANDARD: Parole "[p]ermits shall be granted only if the Board is of the opinion, after consideration of a risk and needs assessment, that there is a reasonable probability that, if the prisoner is released with appropriate conditions and community supervision, the prisoner will live and remain at liberty without violating the law and that release is not incompatible with the welfare of society." M.G.L. c. 127, § 130. In making this determination, the Board takes into consideration an inmate's institutional behavior, their participation in available work, educational, and treatment programs during the period of incarceration, and whether risk reduction programs could effectively minimize the inmate's risk of recidivism. M.G.L. c. 127, § 130. The Board also considers all relevant facts, including the nature of the underlying offense, the age of the inmate at the time of the offense, the criminal record, the institutional record, the inmate's testimony at the hearing, and the views of the public as expressed at the hearing and/or in written submissions to the Board.

DECISION OF THE BOARD: Mr. Cardoza was before the Board for the second time after he was denied parole in 2022. Since the last hearing, Mr. Cardoza has completed Barber Training and Correctional Recovery Academy, as well as attending AA/NA. He was not currently enrolled in programming at the time of the hearing, but he was waitlisted for several programs. The Board finds that Mr. Cardoza would benefit from a period in lower security, where he should remain disciplinary report free. The Board considered Mr. Cardoza's age at the time of the offense, and he stated his remorse for his actions. The Board heard testimony from three members of Mr. Cardoza's family in support of parole. The Board was aware of Mr. Cardoza's disciplinary reports which occurred since the time of the hearing but before the issuance of this decision. The Board concludes that Alberto Cardoza has demonstrated a level of rehabilitation that would make his release compatible with the welfare of society.

SPECIAL CONDITIONS: Waive work for 2 weeks or program; Electronic monitoring for 6 months; Curfew-must be home between 10 PM and 6 AM at parole officer's discretion; Supervise for drugs, testing in accordance with Agency policy; Supervise for liquor abstinence, testing in accordance with Agency policy; Report to assigned MA Parole Office on day of release; No contact with victim's family; Must have mental health counseling for adjustment; Long Term Residential Program; AA/or NA at least 3 times per week

I certify that this is the decision and reasons of the Massachusetts Parole Board regarding the above-referenced hearing. Pursuant to G.L. c. 127, § 130, I further certify that all voting Board Members have reviewed the applicant's entire criminal record. This signature does not indicate authorship of the decision.


Angelo Gomez, Jr., Chair

January 6, 2026
Date