



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Public Safety and Security

PAROLE BOARD

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RECORD OF DECISION

IN THE MATTER OF

BRANDON CALLENDER
W104476

TYPE OF HEARING: Initial Hearing

DATE OF HEARING: February 10, 2026

DATE OF DECISION: July 9, 2026

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

VOTE: Parole is denied with a review in 2 years from the date of the hearing.¹

PROCEDURAL HISTORY: On April 18, 2014, after a jury trial in Bristol Superior Court, Brandon Callender was convicted of second-degree murder in the death of Joshua Fitzgerald. He was sentenced to life in prison with the possibility of parole. On that same date, he was sentenced to 5-to-8 years for assault and battery by means of a dangerous weapon, to be served from and after his life sentence.

On February 10, 2026, Mr. Callender appeared before the Board for an initial hearing. He was not represented by an attorney. The Board's decision fully incorporates by reference the entire video recording of Mr. Callender's February 10, 2026, hearing.

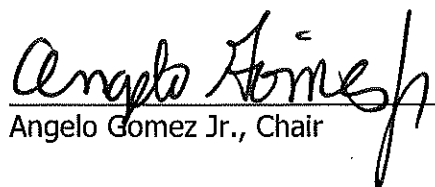
STATEMENT OF THE CASE: On April 4, 2008, in Fairhaven, Brandon Callender (age 18) stabbed and killed 30-year-old Joshua Fitzgerald. That evening, Mr. Fitzgerald had been attending an event at a VFW Hall in Fairhaven with some family and friends. An individual at the event got into an argument with Mr. Fitzgerald, which eventually broke into an extended melee involving as many as 50 people. The fight, in which Mr. Fitzgerald and his friends were outnumbered, spread out into the street. As the Fitzgerald group attempted to leave the scene, Mr. Callender stabbed Mr. Fitzgerald in the abdomen, piercing his liver. Mr. Fitzgerald was driven to the hospital, where he died of the injury.

¹ Two Board Members voted to grant parole to an LTRP after a 6-month stepdown.

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: This was Mr. Callender’s initial hearing before the Board. He was 18-years-old at the time of the offense. He is now 36-years-old and has been incarcerated for 18 years. Mr. Callender has had a number of concerning disciplinary reports, ranging from introduction of drugs, encouraging other inmates to engage in Security Threat Group activities, fighting, making homebrew, and last K2 use in May 2024. The Board also notes, however, that since participation in meaningful programming, he appears to have made significant progress in his rehabilitation. He was enrolled in Emerson College and facilitated Jericho Circle at the time of the hearing. The majority of the Board noted his prior criminal history, including significant violence and current point base score of 9 as concerns. The majority of the Board recognizes he has a significant support system, but he is an individual who is in need of a lot of work to address his need areas. The majority of the Board recommends that Mr. Callender refrain from disciplinary reports and continue to pursue education and all opportunities for further self-development. The Board considered all public testimony in rendering its decision. The Board considered testimony in support of parole from three of Mr. Callender’s friends and a family member. The Board also considered testimony in opposition to parole from four members of Mr. Fitzgerald’s family, as well as Bristol County Assistant District Attorney E. Russell Eonas. The Board concludes that Brandon Callender has not demonstrated a level of rehabilitation that would make his release compatible with the welfare of society.

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

July 9, 2026
Date