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PAROLE BOARD

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Tina M. Hurley
Chair

RECORD OF DECISION

IN THE MATTER OF

CHRISTOPHER CERCE

W94326

TYPE OF HEARING: Initial Hearing

DATE OF HEARING: November 10, 2022

DATE OF DECISION: January 19, 2023

PARTICIPATING BOARD MEMBERS: Tina Hurley, Dr. Charlene Bonner, Tonomey Coleman, Dr. Maryanne Galvin, James Kelcourse, Colette Santa

STATEMENT OF THE CASE: On June 6, 2007, in Bristol Superior Court, Christopher Cerce pleaded guilty to the lesser-included offense of second-degree murder in the death of his infant son, James. He was sentenced to life in prison with the possibility of parole.

Mr. Cerce appeared before the Parole Board for an initial hearing on November 10, 2022. He was represented by Attorney Deirdre Thurber. The entire video recording of Mr. Cerce's November 10, 2022, hearing is fully incorporated by reference to the Board's decision.

DECISION OF THE BOARD: After careful consideration of all relevant facts, including the nature of the underlying offense, the age of the inmate at the time of offense, criminal record, institutional record, the inmate's testimony at the hearing, and the views of the public as expressed at the hearing or in written submissions to the Board, we conclude by unanimous vote that the inmate is not a suitable candidate for parole.

The Board is of the opinion that Christopher Cerce has not demonstrated a level of rehabilitative progress that would make his release compatible with the welfare of society. On April 19, 2007, Mr. Cerce beat his infant son James, resulting in his death. Mr. Cerce has incurred seven disciplinary reports during his incarceration, most recently in 2018. Mr. Cerce's version of the offense conflicts with the injuries sustained by the victim. Mr. Cerce has a very concerning criminal history. Although Mr. Cerce did well while residing in the RTU, the Board is troubled as to why he engaged in no rehabilitative programming between the years of 2012 and 2021. Given his history of addiction, Mr. Cerce should seriously engage in AA/NA, CRA, and other relapse prevention programming. He has completed no programming to address victim

empathy. The Board suggests he also pursue Restorative Justice, parenting courses, and continue counseling.

The applicable standard used by the Board to assess a candidate for parole is: "Parole Board Members shall only grant a parole permit if they are of the opinion that there is a reasonable probability that, if such offender is released, the offender will live and remain at liberty without violating the law and that release is not incompatible with the welfare of society." 120 C.M.R. 300.04. In forming this opinion, the Board has taken into consideration Mr. Cerce's institutional behavior, as well as his participation in available work, educational, and treatment programs during the period of his incarceration. The Board has also considered a risk and needs assessment and whether risk reduction programs could effectively minimize Mr. Cerce's risk of recidivism. After applying this standard to the circumstances of Mr. Cerce's case, the Board is of the unanimous opinion that Christopher Cerce is not yet rehabilitated and, therefore, does not merit parole at this time.

Mr. Cerce's next appearance before the Board will take place in three years from the date of this hearing. During the interim, the Board encourages him to continue working towards his full rehabilitation.

I certify that this is the decision and reasons of the Massachusetts Parole Board regarding the above referenced hearing.



Pamela Murphy, General Counsel

4/19/23
/Date