



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Public Safety and Security



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RECORD OF DECISION

IN THE MATTER OF

JOSE COLON
W51690

TYPE OF HEARING: Initial Hearing

DATE OF HEARING: January 15, 2026

DATE OF DECISION: June 22, 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 3 years from the date of the hearing.¹

PROCEDURAL HISTORY: On April 4, 1985, following a jury trial in Worcester Superior Court, Jose Colon was convicted of murder in the first degree for the death of Trooper George Hanna. He was sentenced to life in prison without the possibility of parole. His life sentence was ordered to be served from and after the 5 to 10-year sentence he was serving at the time for armed robbery.²

On December 23, 1986, in Norfolk Superior Court, Mr. Colon was sentenced to a term of 2.5 to 3 years for possession with intent to distribute a Class B controlled substance to be served from and after his life sentence, concurrent terms of 2.5 to 3 years for an additional count of possession with intent to distribute a class B controlled substance, and two counts of conveying drugs within a prison. These sentences stemmed from an incident on December 28, 1985, where Mr. Colon was observed by Department of Correction staff distributing cocaine to two other inmates.

¹ One Board Member voted to deny parole with a 4 year review. One Board Member voted to deny parole with a 5 year review.

² On September 2, 1983, in Worcester Superior Court, while awaiting trial on the murder charge, Mr. Colon was sentenced to a term of 5 to 10 years for armed robbery, which he served under commitment W39913 and an alias, Jose Hernandez. He was positively identified by the victim as committing the armed robbery of the Aloha Used Furniture store on February 25, 1983. (Mr. Colon denies he committed the armed robbery.) On December 23, 1991, Mr. Colon was discharged from his 5 to 10-year sentence, nunc pro tunc to March 26, 1989, and he began serving his life sentence for the murder of Trooper Hanna.

Mr. Colon became parole eligible following the Supreme Judicial Court's decision in Commonwealth v. Mattis, 493 Mass. 216 (2024), where the court held that sentencing individuals who were ages 18 through 20 at the time of the offense (emerging adults) to life without the possibility of parole is unconstitutional. As a result of the SJC's decision regarding his first-degree murder conviction, Mr. Colon was re-sentenced to life with the possibility of parole after 15 years.

On January 15, 2026, Mr. Colon appeared before the Board for an initial hearing. He was represented by Attorney Shannon Lopez. The Board's decision fully incorporates by reference the entire video recording of Mr. Colon's January 15, 2026, hearing.

STATEMENT OF THE CASE: On the evening of February 26, 1983, Jose Colon shot and killed Massachusetts State Police Officer George Hanna during a car stop. Shortly before the murder, Mr. Colon and two other men, Miguel Rosado and Abimael Colon-Cruz, had been staking out a liquor store in the Worcester area. Each of the men were armed with handguns. At approximately 8:30 p.m., while the men were driving in Auburn, Trooper Hanna (in full uniform and on duty in a marked police cruiser) activated his dome lights and told the driver to pull over and park at the parking lot of J & S Liquors. Trooper Hanna then ordered the men out of the vehicle. While he was frisking one of the men, a struggle broke out, and Mr. Colon shot Trooper Hanna no less than three times. One of the men shot one of the tires of Trooper Hanna's cruiser, and then the men stole his revolver and drove away.

Several witnesses observed the shooting. One witness called the police and was able to provide the registration number of the car used by Mr. Colon and the other men. Another witness followed Mr. Colon in his car and observed the occupants. Another witness provided aid to Trooper Hanna until the police arrived. Trooper Hanna had been shot a total of seven times. He was taken to the hospital, where he died a short time later. Later that evening, after police had found the car used in the shooting and traced it back to an apartment, Mr. Colon-Cruz and Mr. Rosado were arrested at a traffic stop. Inside their car, police recovered Trooper Hanna's firearm and three other firearms. Police later located and arrested Mr. Colon at a different apartment.

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.

Where a parole candidate was convicted of first-degree murder for a crime committed when he was ages 18 through 20 years old, the Board considers the "unique aspects" of emerging adulthood that distinguish emerging adult offenders from older offenders. Commonwealth v. Mattis, 493 Mass. 216, 238 (2024). Individuals who were emerging adults at the time of the offense must be afforded a "meaningful opportunity to obtain release based on demonstrated

maturity and rehabilitation” and the Board evaluates “the circumstances surrounding the commission of the crime, including the age of the offender, together with all relevant information pertaining to the offender’s character and actions during the intervening years since conviction.” Id. (citing Diatchenko v. District Attorney for the Suffolk Dist., 466 Mass. 655, 674 (2013) (Diatchenko I); Miller v. Alabama, 567 U.S. 460, 471 (2012); Graham v. Florida, 560 U.S. 48, 75 (2010)). Since brain development in emerging adulthood is ongoing, the Board also considers the following factors when evaluating parole candidates who committed the underlying offenses as an emerging adult: 1) a lack of impulse control in emotionally arousing situations; 2) an increased likelihood to engage in risk taking behaviors in pursuit of reward; 3) increased susceptibility to peer influence which makes emerging adults more likely to engage in risky behavior; and 4) an emerging adult’s greater capacity for change. See Mattis, 493 Mass. at 225-229.

DECISION OF THE BOARD: This was Mr. Colon’s first appearance before the Board. He was 20-years-old at the time of the offense; he is now 63-years-old. Mr. Colon has served 43 years. He reported he was 30 years sober; however, the Board noted he had open disciplinary reports at the time of the hearing, including for suspicion of drug use. The Board challenged his testimony around his sobriety given the evidence/basis supporting the drug use tickets. More importantly, the Board was interested in understanding if he needed, or needs help, with prescriptions that may have led to use. Mr. Colon denied any use for 30 years. The Board also questioned the nature and circumstances of the armed robbery that he pled guilty to. This offense was committed just prior to the murder of Trooper Hanna. He denied committing the armed robbery. The Board found his version of the murder of Trooper Hanna to lack full accountability. Although he accepts responsibility, Mr. Colon maintains that he closed his eyes and fired his gun 6 times, hitting Trooper Hanna all 6 times. He insists he had no intention of harming or killing Trooper Hanna. Mr. Colon did appear to be remorseful that his actions led to the death of Trooper Hanna. The Board accepts that Mr. Colon had not been afforded much programming or treatment prior to the Mattis decision; however, the Board finds that he is in need of treatment to address his history of trauma and other precipitants he has identified as contributing factors leading to his offending behavior. Mr. Colon scores high on the LSCMI risk assessment tool. The Board also considered the expert opinion and forensic evaluation of Dr. Rojas, who provided the Board with forensic risk assessments and clinical findings in rendering this decision. The Board also considered all public testimony in support of, and in opposition to, parole in rendering its decision. The Board considered testimony in opposition to parole from Trooper Hanna’s family members, Massachusetts State Police Colonel Geoffrey Noble, and Worcester County Assistant District Attorney Jesse Crane. The Board recommends that Mr. Colon address the concerns of the Board, specifically related to accountability and treatment needs. The Board concludes that Jose Colon 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

June 22, 2026
Date