



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Public Safety and Security



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RECORD OF DECISION

IN THE MATTER OF

CORIE STOKES
W69601

TYPE OF HEARING: Review Hearing

DATE OF HEARING: September 18, 2025

DATE OF DECISION: March 3, 2026

PARTICIPATING BOARD MEMBERS: Edith J. Alexander, Dr. Charlene Bonner, Rafael Ortiz, Sarah B. Coughlin, Angelo Gomez Jr., James Kelcourse¹

VOTE: Parole is granted to CRJ or Sober Home two weeks after issuance of decision.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY: On June 12, 2001, following a jury trial in Bristol Superior court, Corie Stokes was convicted of first-degree murder and sentenced to life in prison without the possibility of parole. Mr. Stokes was also found guilty of armed home invasion, for which he was sentenced to a concurrent term of 20-25 years, and unlawful possession of a firearm, for which he was sentenced to a concurrent term of 1-2 years. A charge of conspiracy to commit armed robbery was filed. On December 24, 2013, the Supreme Judicial Court issued a decision in Diatchenko v. District Attorney for Suffolk District & Others, 466 Mass. 655 (2013), in which the Court determined that the statutory provisions mandating life without the possibility' of parole are invalid as applied to juveniles convicted of first-degree murder and decided that such juvenile offenders must be given a parole hearing. On September 10, 2014, Mr. Stokes' life sentence was revised to life with the possibility of parole, nunc pro tunc, to June 12, 2001. On the same date, Mr. Stokes' armed home invasion sentence was revised to a term of 10-15 years, nunc pro tunc, to June 12, 2001, to be served concurrently with his life sentence. Mr. Stokes was 17-years-old at the time of the offenses.

Mr. Stokes was first paroled in 2022 but was returned to custody for violating the terms of his parole in January 2023. Mr. Stokes was re-paroled in December 2023 but was again returned to

¹ Board Member Bonner was not present for the hearing but reviewed the video recording of the hearing and the entirety of the file prior to vote.

custody for violating the terms of his parole in January 2024. Mr. Stokes was before the Board for a review hearing on September 19, 2024. He was denied parole with a review in one year.

On September 18, 2025, Mr. Stokes appeared before the Board for a review hearing. He was represented by Attorneys Seth Orkland, Andrew Dulberg, Michael Crafts, and Kerry Matiack. The Board's decision fully incorporates by reference the entire video recording of Mr. Stokes's September 18, 2025 hearing.

STATEMENT OF THE CASE: On August 9, 1999, Mr. Stokes and a co-defendant entered the home of Cecil Smith in Fall River. The two men were armed with firearms and intended to rob Mr. Smith. Mr. Smith was fatally shot during the robbery. A witness later testified that Mr. Stokes admitted to being the shooter and hiding the gun. Two weapons were located near the scene of the crime.

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 incarcerated individual'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 incarcerated individual'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 incarcerated individual at the time of the offense, the criminal record, the institutional record, the incarcerated individual's testimony at the hearing, and the views of the public as expressed at the hearing and/or in written submissions to the Board (if applicable).

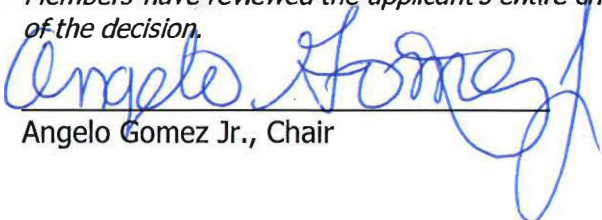
In the context of an incarcerated individual convicted of first or second-degree murder, who was a juvenile at the time the offense was committed, the Board takes into consideration the attributes of youth that distinguish juvenile homicide offenders from similarly situated adult offenders. Consideration of these factors ensures that the parole candidate, who was a juvenile at the time they committed murder, has a meaningful opportunity to obtain release based on demonstrated maturity and rehabilitation. *Diatchenko v. District Attorney for the Suffolk District*, 466 Mass. 655, 674 (2013). See also *Commonwealth v. Okoro*, 471 Mass. 51 (2015). The factors considered by the Board include a juvenile's "lack of maturity and an underdeveloped sense of responsibility, leading to recklessness, impulsivity, and heedless risk-taking; vulnerability to negative influences and outside pressures, including from their family and peers; limited control over their own environment; lack of the ability to extricate themselves from horrific, crime-producing settings; and unique capacity to change as they grow older." *Diatchenko v. District Attorney for the Suffolk District*, 471 Mass. 12, 30 (2015). The Board also recognizes the incarcerated individual's right to be represented by counsel during their appearance before the Board. *Id.* at 20-24.

DECISION OF THE BOARD: Mr. Stokes was before the Board for a review hearing following a revocation. He has been back in custody for over 21 months. Since his return to custody, he has re-invested in programming to address his needs and has established additional supports to assist him with re-entry. The Board emphasized the need to continue to invest in services to assist with establishing healthy relationships, particularly in his interpersonal relationships. He appeared to

accept the Board's recommendations upon his return to custody and demonstrated progress and a commitment to this need area. Mr. Stokes now has additional job training opportunities and is committed to engaging in community organizations addressing accountability. The Board considered the testimony of Mr. Stokes' friends and family in support of parole. The Board concludes by unanimous decision that Corie Stokes has demonstrated a level of rehabilitation that would make his release compatible with the welfare of society.

SPECIAL CONDITIONS: Waive work for 2 weeks; 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 Stephanie Cook; No contact with victim(s); No contact with victim's family; Must have mental health counseling one time per week for interpersonal relationships; CRJ or Sober Home.

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. His signature does not indicate authorship of the decision.


Angelo Gomez Jr., Chair

3-3-26
Date