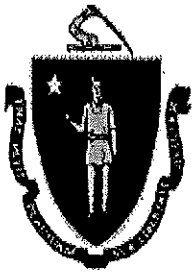


The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Public Safety and Security



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Gloriann Moroney
Chair

Kevin Keefe
Executive Director

DECISION

IN THE MATTER OF

GEORGE ECONOMOU
W62354

TYPE OF HEARING: Initial Hearing

DATE OF HEARING: November 4, 2021

DATE OF DECISION: July 6, 2022

PARTICIPATING BOARD MEMBERS: Gloriann Moroney, Dr. Charlene Bonner, Tonomey Coleman, Sheila Dupre, Tina Hurley, Colette Santa

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. Parole is denied with a review scheduled in three years from the date of the hearing.

I. STATEMENT OF THE CASE

On March 21, 1997, after a jury trial in Middlesex Superior Court, George Economou was convicted of three counts of rape and abuse of a child and was sentenced to life in prison with the possibility of parole. On that same date, Mr. Economou was convicted of five counts of rape and received 15 to 20 year concurrent sentences, two counts of assault with the intent to rape and received 7 to 10 year concurrent sentences, two counts of indecent assault and battery on a child under 14 and received 7 to 10 year concurrent sentences, and five counts of indecent assault and battery of a person over 14 and received 3 to 5 year concurrent sentences. Mr. Economou was convicted on 17 total indictments.

In 1982, George Economou initiated a series of physical and sexual assaults on his three daughters, Martha, Jane Doe, and Virginia.¹ The sexual abuse began when his oldest daughter was 12 and continued until she moved out of the family home in Lowell at age 24. The other two daughters were then victimized by his sexual and physical abuse until the Department of Social Services intervened on April 27, 1996. Mr. Economou has maintained his innocence since his arrest in 1996.

On January 27, 2021, Mr. Economou was granted a medical release by the Department of Correction. He was transferred to Shattuck Hospital for continued care. On July 21, 2021, Mr. Economou was medically cleared and determined to be ready for discharge. Accordingly, Mr. Economou's medical parole permit was revoked, and he was transferred back to prison.

II. PAROLE HEARING ON NOVEMBER 4, 2021²

George Economou, now 67-years-old, appeared before the Parole Board for his initial hearing on November 4, 2021. He was represented by Attorney Kelly Cusack. He postponed his initial hearing in both 2011 and 2016. At the hearing, Mr. Economou maintained his innocence and denied any inappropriate sexual conduct with his three daughters. Mr. Economou, however, admitted to physically abusing his children "on occasion." He claimed that these incidents were triggered by stress. Mr. Economou told the Board that he was "not trying to justify [his actions, he] was very scared and overwhelmed." Although his parenting style differed from others for "cultural and generational" reasons, Mr. Economou admitted that he "should have acted differently or sought help from somebody."

The Board noted that Mr. Economou has received only one disciplinary report throughout his incarceration. He has completed OSHA training and received a certificate in restaurant and hotel management. Nonetheless, Board Members relayed their concern that Mr. Economou has participated in minimal rehabilitative programming or treatment and has refused to engage in Sex Offender Treatment Program (SOTP). Mr. Economou explained that he has not participated in SOTP because he is innocent of the sexual offenses for which he was convicted. Board Members have recognized that Mr. Economou suffered extreme complications following the contraction of COVID-19 in early 2021. He was released on medical parole, which was later revoked after he was no longer considered terminally ill. However, Mr. Economou reports that he is still suffering from the lasting effects of "post-COVID syndrome."

The Board considered testimony in support of parole from Mr. Economou's son, as well as two of his daughters, who are also his victims. The Board considered testimony, and a letter of opposition, from the Middlesex County District Attorney's Office.

III. DECISION

The Board is of the opinion that George Economou has not demonstrated a level of rehabilitative progress that would make his release compatible with the welfare of society. Mr. Economou was convicted of numerous counts of sexual assault against his children. He refused to participate in Sex Offender Treatment, citing his factual innocence. He has only completed

¹ The names of the victims are the same pseudonyms used in the appellate cases to protect the victims' identities.


² The entire video recording of Mr. Economou's November 4, 2021 hearing is fully incorporated by reference to the Board's decision.

two programs that are related to occupational readiness. He has failed to engage in any meaningful programming to address his areas of need. The Board is willing to reconsider his petition upon successful completion of Sex Offender Treatment. The Board considered testimony from two of his prior victims, who are in support of parole.

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. Economou'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. Economou's risk of recidivism. After applying this standard to the circumstances of Mr. Economou's case, the Board is of the unanimous opinion that George Economou is not yet rehabilitated and, therefore, does not merit parole at this time.

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

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.


Pamela Murphy, General Counsel

7/6/22
Date