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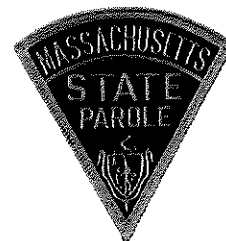
The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Public Safety and Security

PAROLE BOARD

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Tina M. Hurley
Chair

Lian Hogan
Executive Director

RECORD OF DECISION

IN THE MATTER OF

JOSE ESPINO

W39313

TYPE OF HEARING: Review Hearing

DATE OF HEARING: February 28, 2024

DATE OF DECISION: April 23, 2024

PARTICIPATING BOARD MEMBERS: Edith J. Alexander, Dr. Charlene Bonner, Tonomey Coleman, Sarah B. Coughlin, Tina M. Hurley, James Kelcourse

VOTE: Parole is granted on/after two weeks from issuance of Decision to ICE or Interstate Compact Florida, if released from ICE custody.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY: On November 10, 1982, in Hampden Superior Court, Jose Espino pleaded guilty to second-degree murder in the death of Christine Lowe and was sentenced to life in prison with the possibility of parole. Parole was denied following an initial hearing in 1997 and after review hearings in 2002, 2007, 2010, 2012, 2017, and 2023. On February 28, 2024, Mr. Espino appeared before the Board for a review hearing. He was represented by Attorney Michael Phelan. The Board's decision fully incorporates, by reference, the entire video recording of Mr. Espino's February 28, 2024 hearing.

STATEMENT OF THE CASE: On March 24, 1982, the lifeless body of 21-year-old Christine Lowe was discovered by a neighbor at her home on Appleton Street in Holyoke. Ms. Lowe was found on the bed with a single gunshot wound to her head. It was determined that the murder occurred two days prior. Several witnesses stated that 22-year-old Jose Espino, the boyfriend of Ms. Lowe, was in the area of her home for several days before her death. When Mr. Espino was questioned by police, he initially lied about his whereabouts on the night of the murder. Ultimately, however, he admitted that he was at the apartment and shot Ms. Lowe.

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).

DECISION OF THE BOARD: This was Mr. Espino's eighth appearance before the Board. Mr. Espino was 22-years-old when he committed the offense and is now 63-years-old. He has been incarcerated for 42 years. Since the last hearing, Mr. Espino accepted the Board's recommendation and engaged in Domestic Violence programming. He completed the Family Violence program. Mr. Espino has been sober for 36 years. He has engaged in Violence Prevention programming and Jericho Circle and participated in AA. He has had no D (disciplinary) reports in 36 years. Mr. Espino presented with insight into his trauma history, substance use disorder, and their relationship to the offense. The Board notes that Mr. Espino has significant medical issues, Traumatic Brain Injury, and reports symptoms of PTSD, as well as significant learning disabilities. His re-entry plan will address these ongoing needs. The Board considered opposition testimony from two members of the victim's family and Hampden County ADA Michael Julien. The Board concludes by unanimous decision that Jose Espino has demonstrated a level of rehabilitation that would make his release compatible with the welfare of society.

SPECIAL CONDITIONS: Approve home plan before release, if released from ICE; Release to ICE or Interstate Compact Florida, if released from ICE; Waive work for 2 weeks; Must be home between 10 pm and 6 am or at Parole Officer's discretion; Electronic monitoring or at Parole Officer's discretion; 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 victim(s)' family; Must have substance abuse evaluation and must comply with recommended treatment plan; Counseling for Traumatic Brain Injury, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, and Intimate Partner Relations.

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.


Tina M. Hurley, Chair

4/23/24
Date