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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

Daniel Nakamoto  
Acting Executive Director

**RECORD OF DECISION**

**IN THE MATTER OF**

**JOSE ESPINO**

**W39313**

**TYPE OF HEARING:** Review Hearing

**DATE OF HEARING:** February 16, 2023

**DATE OF DECISION:** June 7, 2023

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

**STATEMENT OF THE CASE:** On November 10, 1982, in Hampden Superior Court, Jose Espino pleaded guilty to second degree murder in the death of 21-year-old Christine Lowe and was sentenced to life in prison with the possibility of parole.

Mr. Espino appeared before the Parole Board for a review hearing on February 16, 2023. He was represented by Attorney Michael Phelan. Mr. Espino was denied parole after his initial hearing in 1997, as well as after his review hearings in 2002, 2007, 2010, 2012, and 2017. The entire video recording of Mr. Espino's February 16, 2023, 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 that the inmate is not a suitable candidate for parole.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Three Board Members voted to deny parole and three Board Members voted to grant parole. A majority vote is required for parole to be granted. Because of the split vote, the Board will conduct Mr. Espino's review hearing in one year from the date of this hearing.

The Board is of the opinion that Jose Espino has not demonstrated a level of rehabilitative progress that would make his release compatible with the welfare of society. Mr. Espino shot and killed his 21-year-old girlfriend, Christine Lowe, on March 22, 1982. The Board notes that he has been disciplinary report-free for thirty-five years. He has been sober since 1988. Although he has participated in programming, he has not pursued any type of domestic violence rehabilitation, like a correspondence course. The Board acknowledges domestic violence programming is not offered at the institution. The Board wanted Mr. Espino to develop a stronger, more detailed parole plan that will identify how his various needs (medical, mental health, and trauma) will be supported in the community. The Board is particularly interested to see Mr. Espino present a domestic violence relapse prevention plan and identify a healthy relationship counseling plan before his next hearing.

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

Mr. Espino's next appearance before the Board will take place in one year 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. 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

6/7/23  
Date