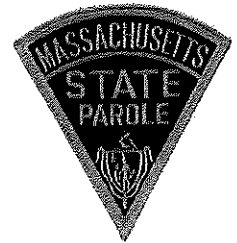




The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Public Safety and Security
PAROLE BOARD

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RECORD OF DECISION

IN THE MATTER OF

RAMON VIZCARRONDO
W57486

TYPE OF HEARING: Initial Hearing
DATE OF HEARING: June 25, 2025
DATE OF DECISION: November 17, 2025

PARTICIPATING BOARD MEMBERS: Edith J. Alexander, Dr. Charlene Bonner, Tonomey Coleman, Sarah B. Coughlin, James Kelcourse, Rafael Ortiz.¹

VOTE: Parole is denied with a review in 4 years from the date of the hearing.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY: In 1994, following a jury trial in Hampden Superior Court, Ramon Vizcarrondo was convicted of murder in the first-degree for the death of Lisa Santiago. He was sentenced to life in prison without the possibility of parole. In 1998 the SJC reversed his conviction and he was given a new trial. In 1999 Mr. Vizcarrondo was again convicted of murder in the first-degree and sentenced to life without the possibility of parole.

Mr. Vizcarrondo 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 in regard to his first-degree murder conviction, Mr. Vizcarrondo's mittimus was corrected to reflect that his life sentence carried the possibility of parole after 15 years.

On June 25, 2025, Mr. Vizcarrondo appeared before the Board for a review hearing. He was represented by Attorney Matthew Koes. The Board's decision fully incorporates by reference the entire video recording of Mr. Vizcarrondo's June 25, 2025, hearing.

¹ Board Member Coleman and Board Member Coughlin were not present for the hearing, but both reviewed the video recording of the hearing and the entirety of the file prior to vote.

STATEMENT OF THE CASE: On December 7, 1993, at approximately 1:30 a.m., Lisa Santiago (age 10 ½ months) was pronounced dead at Springfield's Baystate Medical Center's Emergency Room. Lisa was brought to the hospital by ambulance from the home that she shared with her mother and her mother's boyfriend, Ramon Vizcarrondo (age 18). Police transported Mr. Vizcarrondo and the baby's mother to the hospital behind the ambulance. Before the emergency physician informed them of the baby's death, he asked them each what caused the baby's hospitalization. The baby's mother was too distraught to speak. Mr. Vizcarrondo stated that, while the baby was in his care, she began to cry in her crib. He picked up the baby, but she "dropped" to the floor and stopped breathing.

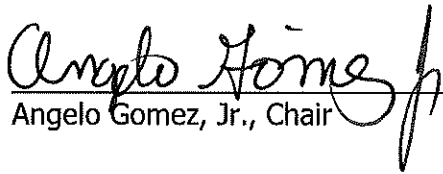
Mr. Vizcarrondo offered police multiple, conflicting versions of events when describing the final hour of the baby's life. He admitted to squeezing and biting the baby, but denied responsibility for her death. He later stated that her death was accidental; however, he provided differing versions of events to explain the death. Neither scenario was supported by expert physicians who testified at trial.

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: Mr. Vizcarrondo appeared before the Board for his initial hearing pursuant to the *Mattis* decision. He has been incarcerated for over 30 years. The Board considered the nature and circumstances of the underlying offense, including the age of the victim. Mr. Vizcarrondo has a lengthy disciplinary history while incarcerated. He has not had a steady employment history while incarcerated. He has very limited rehabilitative programming. He is encouraged to participate in Violence Reduction, Victim Empathy, and other programs to further his rehabilitation efforts to reduce his risk of recidivism and add insight to his behaviors. The Board concludes by unanimous decision that Ramon Vizcarrondo has not demonstrated a level of rehabilitation that would make his release compatible with the welfare of society. The Board considered testimony in support of parole from both a licensed clinical social worker and Mr. Vizcarrondo's brother. The Board also considered the statement of Lisa Santiago's mother, as well as the testimony of Hampden County Assistant District Attorney Elizabeth Dunphy Farris, in opposition to parole.

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

11-17-25
Date