



*The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Public Safety and Security*



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RECORD OF DECISION

IN THE MATTER OF

**RAUL ROBLES JR.
W51805**

TYPE OF HEARING: Initial Hearing

DATE OF HEARING: November 20, 2025

DATE OF DECISION: March 16, 2026

PARTICIPATING BOARD MEMBERS: Edith J. Alexander, Dr. Charlene Bonner, Sarah B. Coughlin, Angelo Gomez Jr., James Kelcourse, Rafael Ortiz¹

VOTE: Parole is denied with a review in 2 years from the date of the Hearing.²

PROCEDURAL HISTORY: On January 16, 1992, following a jury trial in Hampden County Superior Court, Raul Robles Jr. was convicted of murder in the first-degree for the death of Daniel Larson and armed robbery. He was sentenced to two concurrent sentences of life in prison without the possibility of parole. On that same date, he was found guilty of carrying a firearm and sentenced to 4-to-5 years. This sentence was ordered to run concurrently with his life sentences.

Mr. Robles 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 regarding his first-degree murder conviction, Mr. Robles was re-sentenced to life with the possibility of parole after 15 years.

On November 20, 2025, Mr. Robles appeared before the Board for an initial hearing. He was represented by Attorney Shannon Lopez. The Board's decision fully incorporates by reference the entire video recording of Mr. Robles' November 20, 2025, hearing.

¹ Chair Gomez was not present for the hearing, but reviewed the video recording of the hearing and the entirety of the file prior to vote.

² Two Board Members voted to grant parole.

STATEMENT OF THE CASE: In the early morning hours of February 10, 1991, 19-year-old Raul Robles Jr. and two co-defendants shot and killed 19-year-old Daniel Larson during an armed robbery in Holyoke. Mr. Larson was found shot to death in a section of Holyoke where he was known to purchase marijuana. Mr. Robles was seen in the area several hours prior to the murder, stating that he was "looking for someone to rob." He was wearing a blue coat. Mr. Robles was arrested on the afternoon of the murder, wearing the same coat with visible blood stains. The coat was sent to the State Crime Laboratory for analysis. At trial, forensic chemists opined that Mr. Larson's blood stains were found on the jacket worn by Mr. Robles.

An autopsy of Mr. Larson's body revealed the cause of death as two gunshot wounds, one to the neck and one to the right chest. Both wounds were inflicted at close range by bullets from a .38 caliber revolver. The weapon that fired the fatal shots was later recovered from the apartment of Mr. Robles' sister. Mr. Robles had been seen in the weeks leading up to the murder, carrying a weapon that looked like the murder weapon.

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. Robles appeared for the first time before the Board. He was 19-years-old at the time of the offense; he is now 53-years-old. Mr. Robles has maintained his innocence throughout his incarceration. Mr. Robles has served 34 years. Mr. Robles has recently engaged in programming. He has renounced his gang affiliation, which was accepted by the Department of Correction. Mr. Robles has 22 disciplinary reports, none for violence. He states he has been sober for 32 years. The majority of the Board is of the opinion that Mr. Robles needs to engage in further rehabilitative programming and would benefit from engaging in Hi-Set and Vocational Programs. The Board recognizes that achieving his Hi-Set may be challenging based on testing provided by Neurophysiologist Elena Rojas. The Board did consider Dr. Rojas' expert evaluation in rendering its opinion. The Board notes that Mr. Robles had significant trauma in his history, which led to a dysfunctional lifestyle. He would benefit from programming to address his needs, including Vocational Skills Building. Some Board Members recommend programming that includes Victim Empathy and Restorative Justice, which may be challenging given his innocence claim. The Board considered the written submissions of Mr. Robles' family members in support of parole. The Board considered the testimony of Mr. Larson's family members in opposition to parole. The Board also considered the testimony of Hampden County ADA Lee Baker in opposition to parole. The Board concludes that Raul Robles Jr. has not demonstrated a level of rehabilitation that would make his release compatible with the welfare of society.

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

March 16, 2026
Date