

Charles D. Baker  
Governor

Karyn Polito  
Lieutenant Governor

Terrence Reidy  
Secretary

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

**PAROLE BOARD**

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Gloriann Moroney  
Chair

Kevin Keefe  
Executive Director

**RECORD OF DECISION**

**IN THE MATTER OF**

**THOMAS E. KOONCE**  
**W52802**

**TYPE OF HEARING:** Initial Hearing

**DATE OF HEARING:** March 24, 2022

**DATE OF DECISION:** April 12, 2022

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

**STATEMENT OF THE CASE:** On June 23, 1992, after a jury trial in Bristol Superior Court, Thomas E. Koonce was convicted of the murder in the first degree of 24-year-old Mark Santos and was sentenced to life imprisonment without the possibility of parole.

On June 3, 2014, Mr. Koonce submitted a petition for commutation. On October 27, 2020, the Board conducted a public hearing regarding Mr. Koonce's petition. After due consideration, the Board voted unanimously to recommend favorable consideration. On February 16, 2022 Governor Charles Baker, with the advice and consent of the Governor's Council, commuted Mr. Koonce's sentence to life with the possibility of parole. Accordingly, Mr. Koonce became immediately parole eligible.

Mr. Koonce appeared before the Parole Board for an initial hearing on March 24, 2022 and was represented by Attorney Timothy Foley. This was Mr. Koonce's second appearance before the Board since his commutation hearing on October 27, 2020. The entire video recording of Mr. Koonce's March 24, 2022 hearing is fully incorporated by reference to the Board's decision.

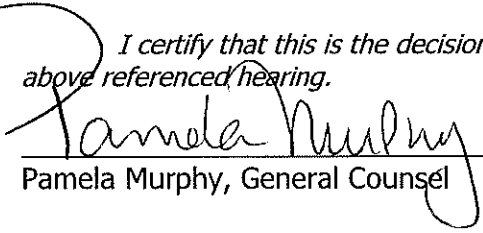
**DECISION OF THE BOARD:** After careful consideration of all relevant facts, including the nature of the underlying offense, the age of the inmate at the time of offense, criminal record, institutional record, the inmate's testimony at the hearing, and the views of the public as expressed at the hearing or in written submissions to the Board, we conclude by a unanimous vote that the inmate is a suitable candidate for parole. Reserve to Community Resources for Justice (CRJ)- Brooke House for four months. Upon completion of CRJ, Mr. Koonce may submit

a family sponsored or independent living home plan. Mr. Koonce has been incarcerated for approximately 31 years for the murder of Mark Santos. He was serving a life sentence without the possibility of parole for his first-degree murder conviction that was commuted by Governor Baker on February 16, 2022. Mr. Koonce has taken responsibility for the death of Mr. Santos and has spent his incarceration working towards his rehabilitation. He has had an excellent adjustment and has taken extraordinary steps to improve himself and the lives of other incarcerated individuals including initiating Restorative Justice and continuing involvement in the Second Thoughts Program. He has been a mentor and facilitator to many in the incarcerated population. Mr. Koonce's self-development has also included achieving a bachelor's degree and vocational skills. Much of his rehabilitative work occurred prior to any opportunity for parole. Mr. Koonce also has an excellent network of supports in the community which will be invaluable to his reentry. He presented as remorseful and empathetic towards the Santos family and the community.

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." In forming this opinion, the Board has taken into consideration Mr. Koonce'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. Koonce's risk of recidivism. After applying this appropriately high standard to the circumstances of Mr. Koonce's case, the Board is of the unanimous opinion that Mr. Koonce is rehabilitated and merits parole at this time.

**Special Conditions:** Reserve to Criminal Resources for Justice-Brooke House for four months and then to approved family sponsored or independent living home plan; Waive work for two weeks; Must be at home between 10 p.m. and 6 a.m.; ELMO-electronic monitoring; 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 a substance abuse evaluation – adhere to plan; Must have counseling for adjustment/transition; May have contact with [named individuals] and individuals who are working with the Transformational Prison Project.

*I certify that this is the decision and reasons of the Massachusetts Parole Board regarding the above referenced hearing.*

  
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Pamela Murphy, General Counsel

4/12/2022  
Date