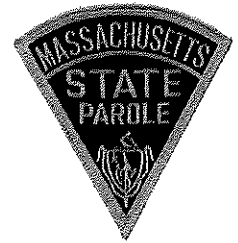


The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Public Safety and Security

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RECORD OF DECISION

IN THE MATTER OF

WAYLAND COLEMAN
W65484

TYPE OF HEARING: Initial Hearing

DATE OF HEARING: May 8, 2025

DATE OF DECISION: October 14, 2025

PARTICIPATING BOARD MEMBERS: Edith J. Alexander, Dr. Charlene Bonner, Tonomey Coleman, Sarah B. Coughlin James Kelcourse¹

VOTE: Parole is denied with a review in 3 years from the date of the hearing.²

PROCEDURAL HISTORY: On October 29, 1998, in Worcester Superior Court, Wayland Coleman was found guilty of first-degree murder and sentenced to life in prison without the possibility of parole. On that same date, he was sentenced to 1 year for possession of a firearm, to be served concurrently with his life sentence.

Mr. Coleman 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 Mr. Coleman's first-degree murder conviction, he was re-sentenced to life with the possibility of parole after 15 years.

On May 8, 2025, Mr. Coleman appeared before the Board for an initial hearing. He was represented by Attorney Chetan Tiwari and Attorney Dana Goldblatt. The Board's decision fully incorporates by reference the entire video recording of Mr. Coleman's May 8, 2025, hearing.

¹ Board Member Ortiz was recused from this hearing and did not participate in the vote.

² One Board Member voted to grant parole to a Long-Term Residential Program or CRJ.

STATEMENT OF THE CASE: At approximately 1:55 a.m., on May 25, 1997, a fight erupted as a crowd exited the Eden Restaurant on Water Street in Worcester. Wayland Coleman (age 19) and Neal-Sabree McClain (age 17) were among those fighting. At some point during the fight, Mr. Coleman left the crowd, walked to a nearby car, and obtained a gun from the trunk. Mr. Coleman then turned back toward Mr. McClain, pointed the gun at him, and shot him at close range. Mr. McClain fell to the ground. As Mr. McClain lay on the ground, Mr. Coleman stepped back and shot him a second time. There was no evidence that Mr. McClain was armed at the time of the shooting. Mr. Coleman then ran to a car with three other men, and the four men sped away from the area. When emergency services arrived to render aid, they found Mr. McClain lying in the street with a gunshot wound to his chest. Mr. McClain was transported to the hospital, where he succumbed to his injuries.³

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.

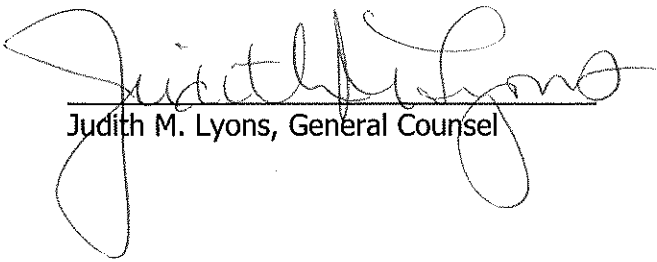
Where a parole candidate was convicted of first-degree murder for a crime committed when he was ages 18 through 20 years old, the Board considers the “unique aspects” of emerging adulthood that distinguish emerging adult offenders from older offenders. Commonwealth v. Mattis, 493 Mass. 216, 238 (2024). 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: The Board considered Mr. Coleman’s institutional behavior during his 26 years of incarceration. He incurred over 30 disciplinary reports. He has completed minimal programming. The Board was unable to explore causative factors related to the underlying offense as Mr. Coleman maintains his innocence and, upon the advice of counsel, refused to

³ Statement taken from Commonwealth v. Wayland Coleman 2001 WL 34890517, Brief for the Commonwealth.

answer any questions surrounding, or related to, the underlying facts and circumstances of the crime. Mr. Coleman earned his GED and completed his bachelor's degree through Boston University. He is not currently employed. He scores high risk on the LS/CMI risk assessment tool. The Board concludes that Mr. Coleman 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 five individuals present at the hearing. Testimony in opposition to parole was presented by Worcester County DA Joseph Early Jr., Worcester County ADA Anne Kennedy, and family members of the victim.

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.



Judith M. Lyons, General Counsel

10/14/25
Date