

# **Justice - Today**

## **“Creative Alternatives in Criminal Justice”**

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July 2023

Prior to 1987 Massachusetts prisoners who were serving a sentence of Life without the Possibility of Parole (LWOP) were allowed to apply for minimum security placements after they had served between 8 and 12 years of their sentence. Eventual placement at minimum security allowed abundant opportunity for those LWOP prisoners to demonstrate their individual progress towards complete rehabilitation.

Applicants under consideration for eventual minimum security placement were required to meet strict criteria:

- Applicants must have already demonstrated remorse and accepted responsibility for the crime that they had committed.
- Applicants must have an unblemished institutional record.
- Applicants must have maintained a good working relationship with others, including staff members.

Once approved for minimum security placement, prisoners were expected to continue to conduct themselves flawlessly. Any violations of that mandate would result in immediate return to higher security.

The vast majority of the 64 Life without Parole prisoners being held at minimum security facilities during the early and mid-1980's vigorously adhered to the rules and regulations. However, one very tragic event brought all the good that had been accomplished over the years to a screeching halt. In 1987 a LWOP prisoner who was temporarily released from a minimum security facility for a furlough failed to return. While on escape, that individual committed a heinous crime in the state of Maryland.

Faced with overwhelming political pressure the Massachusetts Department of Correction took action. On December 29, 1987 the remaining 64 LWOP prisoners held in minimum security facilities were rounded up and taken to a medium (higher security) prison. The Old Colony Correctional center located in Bridgewater.

Today, some of those former trusted prisoners remain confined behind the walls and fences of the state's medium security prisons. Some have expired in custody and those remaining are all elderly.

**The question we ask today is this:**

**Do any of these men pose a threat to either public safety or to our communities?**

**THE ANSWER TO THAT QUESTION IS NO!**

These few men have already proven that they deserve a second chance.

**WHEN CONSIDERING LENDING YOUR SUPPORT FOR THE  
RELEASE OF THESE REHABILITATED MEN,  
PLEASE CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING**

- All of these particular prisoners have already served in excess of 40 years in state prison.
- Some of these men have served in excess of 50 years in prison.
- All of these men have long-ago aged out of criminal thinking.
- Most are in their late 60's or mid to late 70's.
- Most also participated in the now defunct "furlough program".
- Most worked on a daily basis for an extended period of time in our communities, either on correctional work crews, or in various state hospitals assisting patients and hospital staff.
- Some of these prisoners won high acclaim for their heroic acts while they were held at minimum security facilities.
- These prisoners represent the most remorseful of the state's 5,800 current adult offenders.

**IF YOU BELIEVE IN JUSTICE TEMPERED WITH MERCY  
YOU CAN HELP**

- Contact local media outlets. Ask them to look into what we have outlined in this communication.
- Contact your local state Representative or state Senator. Ask them to look into the plight of these 64 prisoners.
- Ask your Church or Social group to become involved in seeking clemency for these few men.
- Contact additional family members and friends, tell them how you feel about this issue and ask for their support.
- Use social media to spread information about the plight of these men.

**All of these men take complete responsibility for their earlier transgressions. All are extremely remorseful. All have long-ago aged out of criminal thinking. All are thankful for your help.**