

Board decisions must be based on assessing the person currently in front of them today, rather than their crime of conviction or past criminal history, and the regulations must fully reflect that approach. The risk to society that the person poses presently should be the main determinant for all persons regardless of the nature of their crime.

Individuals with no recent history of violence, and those who have gone to great lengths to become a contributing member of society deserve to be released and back with their family members who have missed them deeply.

A 2010 study by the Department of Corrections and Community Supervision (DOCCS) proved that recidivism rates for people who have served these long sentences for the most serious crimes, specifically murder, are exceptionally low—less than 1% of people return for a new conviction.

The Parole Board is responsible for keeping thousands of people locked up and away from their families for decades beyond their minimum sentence. And the number of people in prison over the age of 50 has increased by nearly a hundred percent since 2000.

The Board must provide a more meaningful and timely process for appealing parole denials. Repeated parole denials deny families and communities of invaluable members who could make incredible contributions on the outside if released.

—Brooke Taylor