



OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY

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Statement from District Attorney George Brauchler

With a mere stroke of his pen and buried under the coverage of an urgent, global pandemic, Gov. Jared Polis wiped away three separate unanimous jury verdicts for some of the worst murderers in our state's history. And he did it without complying with the law.

Colorado Revised Statute 16-17-102 makes clear that the governor must submit any application for commutation to the district attorney and make efforts to seek the comments of the actual prosecutors from the criminal case before approving such application. This governor has never reached out to me or any member of the prosecution team, all of whom are still in the area, for any comments, consultation, or input of any kind before rescuing these heinous, cold-blooded murderers from their earned sentences. I learned about the news of these historic commutations on the largest cases in Colorado from a staffer in the governor's office only hours before it was announced.

More troubling still, Gov. Polis commuted the sentences of witness assassins Sir Mario Owens and Robert Ray, who have never asked for commutation. That's because their cases are still in the appellate process. Rather than wait for the legal process, Gov. Polis apparently decided on his own, without any consultation or input from our office, to reduce their sentences forever to mere life in prison. That does nothing to end their appellate process. Instead, they will get to continue to challenge their guilty verdicts and seek a new trial, but this time, they only face life in prison.

Unlike the signing of the death penalty repeal bill, there was no urgency to commuting the sentences of these murderers of multiple Coloradans; combined, they have murdered seven innocent people. The decision to do it during a global pandemic is disrespectful to the victims, the jurors and the public. It is not leadership, but weakness and political opportunism.

The decision to pass and sign the death penalty repeal bill should bring a smile to the faces of future serial killers, terrorists, cop killers, mass murderers, child killers, and those in prison who decide to kill again. We have also reduced the protections for witnesses to crime by lowering the bar for their murders. Colorado's pro-offender legislature and its current governor have signaled that those lives are worth more protection than those of their victims. There is a reason the life-for-killers politicians blocked Coloradans' ability to object to this law through the petition process: They know Coloradans disagree with them.

There are a few in Colorado today who will cheer the sparing of the lives of these cold-blooded murderers. For the rest of Colorado, make no mistake: We will save no money. We are not safer. We are not a better people. And the only lives spared are those who commit the ultimate acts of evil against us.

To the families of those innocent Coloradans murdered by the men who had been on death row, I say "I am sorry. I tried to uphold justice for you."

To my fellow Coloradans, I say "elections have consequences."

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