

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION AND SUPPORT

December 5th 1996 is a day I will never be able to forget. On that day, Jorge Munoz killed my son Christopher McNelly on the order of Latin Kings leader, Victor Rodriguez.

Prior to Christopher's murder, there was an argument at a wedding. It began when Rodriguez remarked to my son's fiancé he could do a better job with her than Christopher. He confronted Chris at a later date, pushed Chris to the ground and they started fighting. Chris's friend broke up the fight. At the time, Chris's fiancé was three months pregnant and pleaded with them to stop the fighting, reminding them she was pregnant and shouldn't be upset or stressed because of her baby.

Months later, they saw each other again. Rodriguez started the argument. He pulled out a knife and tried to stab Chris. He survived that altercation, but an hour later, Christopher was surrounded by Rodriguez, Muñoz and other members of the Latin Kings. Rodriguez gave Muñoz an order to kill Christopher. With that, Munoz removed a 12 gauge shotgun he had hidden underneath his coat and shot and killed Christopher in cold blood.

This was clearly a case of premeditated murder. The fact that Rodriguez returned with his gang within an hour after having an argument with Christopher clearly indicates he had time to orchestrate the shooting and murder of my son. This was not an act committed in the heat of the moment. And, it most certainly was not an accident or mistake. It was, "Cold Blooded Murder."

There were two witnesses to this horrific murder. One worked for the police department who testified he saw Christopher with his hands held up in the air when Muñoz shot him. The other witness was Rodriguez's roommate. He fled to Chicago in fear of his life after being questioned by police about his knowledge of the murder and the observation of Rodriguez and Munoz celebrating the murder.

Releasing Munoz on parole on or after he's 31 years of age will be a clear and present danger to society. His actions have proven he has no value for human life.

My grandson Christopher Jr is thirteen years old. He knows his father was murdered. He knows his father and mother never had the wedding they had planned, never had a brother or sister for him to play with, nor did they ever get to live their lives as they had planned. Christopher realizes his father will never be there for important milestones in his life, a ball game, graduation, marriage or to help explain life's mysteries.

With the release of Victor Rodriguez or Jorge Muñoz, we will be in fear of our lives. Gang members have been known to take vengeance upon those who have testified against them. There is no indication that either of them are no longer active in the Latin Kings. They should serve their original Life Sentences, with no further chance for parole for the murder of my son Christopher McNelly.

Supporting HB1999 is giving permission for juveniles to commit murder without the dire consequences of spending their lives behind bars. More so, it is creating a loophole for gangs like the Latin Kings, the Bloods, and the Crips, to have juveniles do their dirty work since they will not have to serve a full term sentence in prison.

Supporting this bill will not reduce crime but will enhance it. It will not help to empty prisons, it will fill them. It will not deter children from making the wrong choice when faced with decisions of right or wrong. Rather, it will help to justify the poor choices they make and allow them to be pawns in adult crimes. If keeping our children, the victims and the community at large safe is your goal, HB 1999 is not the way to accomplish this task.

If for some reason either personal or political you are determined to give your support to this bill, you may wish to add the following amendment: "Any individual released from their original prison sentence under HB 1999, if arrested and convicted of a felony hereafter, shall be remitted back into prison to serve their original sentence with no opportunity for parole or release in the future."

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