

Illinois Victims

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Victims and Law Enforcement Join to Give Notice to Illinois Senate Leaders That Attempts to Manipulate the Prisoner Review Board Will Not Be Tolerated

Chicago, Illinois: The following letter was sent today to the entire membership of the Illinois Senate, with a copy sent to the Governor:

“Enough is enough! We are outraged over the recent debacle in the Illinois Senate regarding the makeup of the Illinois Prisoner Review Board. The actions taken by some Senators bent on removing law enforcement voices from the Prisoner Review Board are utterly offensive to the memory of the fallen heroes in Illinois Law Enforcement and to the families of murder victims. This incident was an absolutely unacceptable act of political manipulation and patronage that endangers the Illinois public, and the political reputations of those pressured into supporting such an effort.

The end result of the recent attempt to remove Mr. Salvador Diaz from the Prisoner Review Board, after last year’s secretive removal of former Police Chief John Stenson, will be the release from Illinois Prisons of the “worst of the worst” -- “cop-killers” who are among the few remaining indeterminately sentenced. Both Mr. Stenson and Mr. Diaz are career law enforcement officers. And interestingly, while their voting records have reflected diverse and balanced judgments about C number prisoners’ releases, both of them have been more alike in their general rejection of the release of those who have murdered law enforcement.

The enabling statutes of the PRB say that offenders cannot be released where the release will “deprecate the seriousness of the offense”. American society places the highest possible value on the lives of fallen police officers -- for very good reason--quite simply, *we cannot ask them to risk their lives day after day for us, if we do not in turn covenant with them to hold anyone who would kill them to the absolute highest levels of accountability. Illinois’ law enforcement put their lives on the line for their families and all of us every day.* This calls for the very best from us.

The independent functions in law that are prescribed for the PRB to perform in their enabling statutes, as well as public safety itself, are threatened by a lack of balance in the makeup of the board. The use of the Prisoner Review Board for placing patronage appointments is dangerous,

highly unethical, and a violation of the public trust that elected officials take a sacred oath to protect.

The PRB's makeup is described in this way in its enabling statutes, "The Board shall consist of 15 persons appointed by the Governor by and with the advice and consent of the Senate. One member of the Board shall be designated by the Governor to be Chairman and shall serve as Chairman at the pleasure of the Governor. The members of the Board shall have had at least 5 years of actual experience in the fields of penology, corrections work, law enforcement, sociology, law, education, social work, medicine, psychology, other behavioral sciences, or a combination thereof. At least 6 members so appointed must have had at least 3 years experience in the field of juvenile matters. No more than 8 Board members may be members of the same political party." It is clear that the law intends for the PRB members to have a balance of professional experience and expertise relevant to the functions of the board, and to also be balanced by perspective, including political party, etc. It is very clear that this body cannot be politically influenced as it practices its "independent, quasi-judicial" function— too much is at stake.

We were also most disturbed to hear that the Illinois States Attorneys, who have the very difficult, vital and sometimes thankless job of keeping us all safe and holding criminals accountable, were punished by Senate leadership by the cutting of funds for the videotaping of interrogations, for simply doing their jobs in this matter! We cannot make sense of this decision that also threatens the integrity of Illinois' criminal justice system.

Prisoner advocacy organizations such as the John Howard Association used the removal of Mr. Stenson last year to trumpet their own success. They claimed to be instrumental in Senate Executive Appointment Committee Chair's position on Mr. Stenson. With pressure now being wielded by these same members of the Senate to have favorite patronage appointments of their own made to the PRB, the whole process is beginning to lose credibility.

Convicted murderers and cop-killers, the unbelievably damaged families left behind, public safety, and the integrity of the criminal justice system are *not* political footballs to be played with in this manner.

The families of these fallen law enforcement heroes and their law enforcement colleagues, along with all murder victims families of C Number prisoners, have to go through a horrible, time-consuming, and re-traumatizing process for several months out of every year in most cases. They take off work; they gather petitions, signed by thousands of Illinois residents who care about law enforcement and public safety. They travel to the prisons and to Springfield for hearings. They re-live the nightmare; opening the wounds again and again. They have had to fight this horrible process year after year after year. We owe them, at the very least, a process with some integrity.

We ask that the Governor appoint a comparable law enforcement member to fill Mr. Stenson's open spot. And that he works with the Senate to keep the vital balance of the Prisoner Review Board with the interests of public safety, law enforcement and criminal justice foremost over patronage interests. We also ask that the glaring lack of victim representation on the PRB be addressed. We thank those of you in the Senate who have already done the right thing on this issue and we call upon all in the Senate to work to de-politicize such an important process. Senators should not use PRB appointments to advance their agendas in other areas. We ask your most sincere efforts to prevent patronage and political deal making from being used when it comes to the Prisoner Review

Board. We ask that the Senate not threaten funding for the vitally important work of the States Attorneys as a way of manipulating appointments to the Prisoner Review Board. We will be watching with great interest.”

**Organizational Signatories to the Joint Letter to the Illinois Senate and Governor
Regarding Prisoner Review Board Appointments - June 12, 2008**

Laimutis "Limey" Nargelenas, Deputy Director
Illinois Association of Chiefs of Police

Ted Street, Representing the 35,000 members statewide of the
Illinois Fraternal Order of Police

Mark Donahue, Representing the
Chicago Fraternal Order of Police

Jennifer Morales, President
Illinois COPS, Concerns of Police Survivors

Donna Marquez, President
Chicago Police Gold Star Memorial Families

Sean M. Smoot, Director and Richard Gillespie, President,
P.B. & P.A. of Illinois
Paul D. Williams, Chairman
Policemen's Benevolent Labor Committee
Police Benevolent and Protective Association of Illinois

Jennifer Bishop-Jenkins, Mary Anne Raymond Blair
IllinoisVictims.org
Barbara Stone, **Winnebago County Victim Advocate**

The 1400 members of the
Chicago Police Emerald Society

Mayor Bill Murphy
Past President, Illinois Municipal League

Fraternal Order of Police,
Illinois Department of Corrections Lodge

The Blue Knights of Illinois

Terry L. Mayborne-Rudeen, Kimberly Mayborne-Spehar family, Jennifer Mayborne-Sutkay family,
Ken Anderson family, Leslie Mayborne, Karolyn Mayborne Lund family. **Friends of Family of
Winnebago County Detective Michael E. Mayborne E.O.W. March 15, 1974**

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