



*Commonwealth of Virginia
Office of the Governor*

Executive Order

NUMBER THREE (2022)

RESTORING INTEGRITY AND CONFIDENCE IN THE VIRGINIA PAROLE BOARD AND THE COMMONWEALTH'S SYSTEM OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE

By virtue of the authority vested in me as Governor, I hereby issue this Executive Order to restore integrity and confidence in the Commonwealth's System of Criminal Justice by terminating the current Virginia Parole Board, naming five highly qualified individuals to the Parole Board, directing the Secretary of Public Safety to perform a programmatic review of the Parole Board's procedures, and requesting the Attorney General conduct a full investigation.

Importance of the Initiative

Article I, Section 8-A of the Constitution of Virginia affords certain rights to victims of crime in the Commonwealth, including the right to reasonable and appropriate notice, information, and protection. Virginia law further requires the Virginia Parole Board provide notice of its decision to grant discretionary parole or the conditional release of an inmate. Virginia law and internal policy and procedure manuals govern the Virginia Parole Board's decisions.

The Virginia Office of the State Inspector General ("OSIG") recently conducted an independent investigation into allegations involving the Virginia Parole Board. These allegations were brought forward by citizens, crime victims and their relatives, and elected Commonwealth's Attorneys. The OSIG investigation revealed some of the inmates released by the Virginia Parole Board had been recently denied parole or otherwise deemed ineligible for parole, raising questions about the lawfulness of the abrupt reversals of these decisions. The Virginia Parole Board also violated victims' rights and broke Virginia law by releasing multiple violent offenders without complying with the legally required notification to the victim or the prosecutor.

To this day, the family members and victims have no answers as to how or why the Virginia Parole Board failed to abide by the laws governing its operations, and no one has been held accountable.

We therefore must ensure confidence and integrity in our criminal justice system. Too often, victims of violent crime are ignored, silenced, and overlooked. Victims deserve to know their voices matter. In order to ensure that these mistakes never happen again, we must fully understand the decisions that led to them.

The Parole Board's failure to uphold the laws enacted by the General Assembly has damaged the integrity of the Commonwealth's System of Criminal Justice and undermined the confidence of our citizens. We therefore must reform the Virginia Parole Board and replace the current members with qualified and committed public safety experts who will uphold the law, properly apply the policies of the Board, and restore confidence and integrity in our system of criminal justice.

Directive

Accordingly, pursuant to the authority vested in me as Chief Executive of the Commonwealth and pursuant to § 53.1-134 of the *Code of Virginia*, I hereby terminate the current parole board, and hereby appoint:

- The Honorable Chadwick Dotson of Wise County, Chairman
- Tracy Banks of the City of Charlottesville
- Cheryl Nici-O'Connell of Chesterfield County
- The Honorable Hank Partin, Sheriff, of Montgomery County
- Carmen Williams of Chesterfield County

Further, the Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security is directed to perform a programmatic review of the Parole Board's duties, procedures, and administration. The review shall include, but not be limited to, increasing the transparency of Parole Board votes, recording reasons for granting parole, and reviewing the management, personnel, and operations of the Parole Board.

This review shall provide recommendations for legislative, administrative, and policy changes that will improve the administration of the agency in fulfilling its solemn public safety mission.

This review shall be submitted to me no later than September 1, 2022.

Attorney General Authorization

By virtue of the authority vested in me by § 2.2-511 of the *Code of Virginia*, I hereby request the Attorney General to coordinate the prosecutorial and investigative efforts and to bring such cases as he may deem appropriate in order to protect the citizens of the Commonwealth and hold accountable any individuals who have violated existing law or violated the rights of victims of crime.

Effective Date

This Executive Directive shall be effective upon its signing and shall remain in force and effect unless amended or rescinded by future executive order or directive.

Given under my hand and under the Seal of the Commonwealth of Virginia, this 15th day of January, 2022.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Glenn Youngkin".

Glenn Youngkin, Governor

Attest:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kelly Thomasson".

Kelly Thomasson, Secretary of the Commonwealth