



For Immediate Release
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Pardon and Parole Board Recommends Commutation for 22 out of 23 Applicants

OKLAHOMA CITY – The Oklahoma Pardon and Parole Board confirmed the will of Oklahoma voters today by recommending almost all 23 applicants being assisted by Oklahomans for Criminal Justice Reform receive commuted sentences from the governor.

The board recommended commutation for 22 out of 23 applicants. These applicants, all of whom would face lesser or no prison time if sentenced today, will now be forwarded to Gov. Mary Fallin, who will ultimately decide if their sentences should be commuted.

“It’s thrilling to see the Pardon and Parole Board agree overwhelmingly with Oklahoma voters’ strong belief that lengthy prison sentences for low-level drug offenses are unnecessary and unjust,” said **Oklahomans for Criminal Justice Reform Chief of Staff, John Estus**. “We urge Gov. Fallin to commute the sentences of the individuals approved today to time served and allow them to return home in time to be with their families for Thanksgiving.”

The 22 applications recommended by the Pardon and Parole Board for commutation Wednesday are part of 31 overall cases under review for excessive and unjust sentences. These individuals’ sentences are grossly out of step with voter approved reforms (SQ 780/781) passed in 2016 and legislative reforms passed earlier this year.

“The board’s actions and the outpouring of public support for this campaign send a clear message to elected leaders to keep reforming Oklahoma’s criminal justice system. There are still more than a thousand people in prison today for simple drug possession,” said Estus. “We need legislation to make recent reforms retroactive and give those Oklahomans an opportunity to return home to their families and become tax-paying citizens.”

Oklahomans for Criminal Justice Reform will continue to advocate for smart-on-crime policies and push for all levels of legislative and state leadership to support smart criminal justice policies. On Dec. 12, the Pardon and Parole Board will have the opportunity to commute the sentences of an additional eight applicants. The Governor has 90 days in which to approve or deny a commutation.

“Gov. Fallin has championed criminal justice reform in this state, and sending these Oklahomans home for the holidays would be a powerful bookend to her work on this critical issue,” said Estus.

About Oklahomans for Criminal Justice Reform

OCJR is a bipartisan coalition of community leaders and experts from across the state working to safely reduce incarceration, save taxpayer dollars, and make Oklahoma’s communities safer by addressing the root causes of crime. It is comprised of some of Oklahoma’s most prominent faith leaders, law enforcement, elected officials, health professionals, and business leaders. To learn more, visit <https://okjusticereform.org/>.

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