



COUNTY OF FRESNO

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NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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DISTRICT ATTORNEY SMITTCAMP ISSUES A STATEMENT ON GOVERNOR NEWSOMS RELEASE OF CONVICTED MURDERER DAVID WEIDERT

On August 9, 2021, Governor Gavin Newsom *FAILED* to block the parole release of convicted murderer David Weidert and now he will walk the streets again as a free man. On June 3rd, 2021, our office, as well as numerous concerned citizens, urged Governor Newsom to block the parole of Weidert, just as he had done in 2019. However, today he chose to take no action, and the consequence is that a murderer will be set free. Prior to Newsom, Governor Brown blocked Weidert's parole twice, the first in 2015 and again in 2018. "Failure to accept responsibility" and an "underdeveloped sense of remorse" were the reasons the Governors cited for blocking the parole of this dangerous murderer on those prior occasions.

Now, Governor Newsom has his changed direction, without providing any real information about what has changed in Weidert to allow this grant of freedom.

"The truth of the matter is these prison releases are not about crime and punishment, or the rehabilitation of criminals. This is Newsom satisfying the people who want to end incarceration and close our prisons, even if that means the state's most dangerous and heinous criminals are set free," said Fresno County District Attorney Lisa Smittcamp.

Inmate David Weidert was convicted for the 1980 murder of the developmentally disabled 20-year-old victim, Mike Morganti. Inmate Weidert used Mike to serve as a look-out to commit a burglary, and when Mike spoke to law enforcement, Inmate Weidert silenced him by luring him into a car and taking him to an isolated location. Mike was then beaten with a baseball bat and a shovel, stabbed with a knife, and **forced to dig his own grave before being buried alive**. Inmate Weidert was convicted of first-degree murder and was sentenced to life in prison.

*"I have been a prosecutor for 24 years and have worked on very difficult and graphic cases. The facts of this case are the worst of the worst. Mr. Morganti was developmentally disabled, and he was kidnapped, forced to dig his own grave, beaten senselessly by a baseball bat, and thrown in a shallow grave by Weidert. Upon examination of his body, after his passing, dirt was found in his lungs, indicating he had been buried alive. It is difficult to comprehend the gravity of the pain and suffering this young man endured before his death. It is **pathetic** that Gavin Newsom is putting his politics, and quest for personal power, over the desires of this victim's family,"* Smittcamp said.

Media may direct inquiries to FCDAMedia@fresnocountyca.gov.
