



THE CITY OF NEW YORK
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
NEW YORK, NY 10007

March 23, 2018

Tina M. Stanford, Esquire
Chairwoman
New York State Board of Parole
Building 2
1220 Washington Avenue
Albany, New York 12226-1799

Dear Ms. Stanford:

The brave men and women of the NYPD who have sacrificed their lives in the line of duty represent the best of us. Their sacrifice is timeless. It doesn't matter how long ago they gave, in the words of Abraham Lincoln, "the last full measure of devotion" – we must remember them and feel their loss as if it were yesterday. In that spirit, I write to you with urgency on behalf of New York City and its police department to ask you to reverse the tragic and incomprehensible decision to parole Herman Bell, a man who helped murder two NYPD officers.

Their names were Police Officer Joseph Piagentini, and Police Officer Waverly Jones. Mr. Bell and his associates lured them into a housing project and shot them to death for no other reason than the uniforms on their backs and the shields on their chests. Mr. Bell has admitted his guilt. If this terrible crime had happened today, he would have received life without the possibility of parole. When he was convicted, that just punishment was not an option, but that does not mean that Mr. Bell deserves freedom or that society would benefit from his release. Far from it.

Three months after he murdered Officers Piagentini and Jones, Mr. Bell murdered San Francisco Police Sergeant John Young in his station house – another cold blooded murder of a dedicated first responder. Paroling Mr. Bell sends the dangerous signal that killing a police officer is anything less than the most heinous of crimes. Freeing him is a matter of great pain and suffering to many family members of the fallen and to the greater family of the NYPD. As someone who has had the humbling experience of sitting with the loved ones of officers killed in the line of duty, I can tell you that the Parole Board's action has opened wounds that never fully heal and brought tears to eyes that have cried enough.

Speak for voices silenced too soon. Murdering a police officer in cold blood is a crime beyond the frontiers of rehabilitation or redemption. I urge the Parole Board to reverse this decision and keep Herman Bell behind bars, where his own evil actions rightly placed him.

Sincerely,

Bill de Blasio
Mayor