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**For Immediate Release**

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## **Brutal Rapist Denied Release Despite Qualifying for Elder Parole Under New Law**

San Diego County District Attorney [Summer Stephan](#) announced today that convicted rapist Randal Gers, 60, has been denied parole by the Board of Parole Hearings. In 1995, Gers kidnapped two different women on two separate occasions. He held them both for hours, bound them, and repeatedly raped, sodomized, and sexually assaulted them. The inmate used a knife to gain control of the women, tied a rope or belt around their neck to control them, and even left one victim tied to a tree in a remote area overnight before returning to sexually assault her again. This defendant had a prior conviction for sexually assaulting a 12-year-old and bashing her over the head.

The defendant received a 567 years-to-life sentence for his crimes, which was the longest sentence ever handed down in San Diego County at the time. His eligible parole date was originally November 2378, however the California Legislature changed the law in 2021 to lower the age of qualification for the Elderly Parole Program to inmates 50 years old or older who have served at least 20 years of continuous incarceration. But for the change in the law, Gers would have never received a parole hearing.

The District Attorney's Office Lifer Unit, led by Deputy District Attorney John Cross, worked diligently to oppose the release of this dangerous inmate, and located the two kidnap and rape victims to alert them to the parole hearing, as well as the change in the law that made parole a possibility for their rapist. The two courageous victims appeared in front of the Parole Board on Tuesday, giving powerful impact statements and the District Attorney's Office vigorously argued against the inmate's release. Ultimately, the Board denied Gers parole for five years.

"These were extremely brutal and horrific crimes deserving of the life in prison sentence the defendant received," DA Stephan said. "It is hard to believe that a sexual predator with multiple victims is eligible for release under this new law, causing additional trauma to victims who had to overcome the damage of the violent crimes they endured and thought their tormenter had received a final justice and sentence. Instead, these and many more victims are being pulled back into the criminal justice system time and time again. Our prosecutors will never abandon our victims and we will stand with them at these parole hearings. We won this battle, but in five years, we will have to fight alongside them again. And we will."

The denial of parole is an excellent example of the work the DA's Lifer Hearing Unit does to represent the voice of the crime victims.

“We’re increasingly seeing inmates being released under the Elderly Parole Program and when the facts and the law support us as in this case, we fight against these unsafe and unjust releases,” Stephan said.

In arguing against parole, Deputy District Attorney John Cross detailed Gers’ disturbing and violent crimes. He also told the Board that Gers had no understanding why he committed the brutal rapes and showed no remorse. The inmate has not completed any self-help programming while in prison and offered excuses as to why he had not.

The DA’s Lifer Hearing Unit was formed in 1995 to ensure that victims of violent crime are given a chance to be heard at these proceedings, and to help prevent inappropriate grants of parole. Since the passage of the elder parole law and many other laws that allow early release of violent offenders, the Unit’s workload has dramatically increased. The Unit prepares for about 50 parole hearings each month, approximately 600 a year, and handles about 300 full hearings.

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About the San Diego County District Attorney’s Office

*The San Diego County DA’s Office prosecutes all felony crimes in the county and misdemeanor crimes committed outside the City of San Diego. The office files about 40,000 criminal cases a year and balances prosecution with numerous crime prevention programs. District Attorney Summer Stephan leads the office of more than 1,000 dedicated employees who pursue fair and equal justice, and support victims daily across San Diego County.*