



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Martin J. Golden

Senate Republicans Call on New York State Parole Board to Keep Cop Killers Behind Bars

MARTIN J. GOLDEN June 14, 2010

Senator Marty Golden and members of the Republican Conference today called on the State Parole Board to deny the release of convicted cop-killer Anthony Blanks, who is scheduled for a parole hearing Tuesday morning at Shawangunk State Prison in Wallkill, NY. The Senators were joined by former Larchmont Mayor Liz Feld and Larchmont Chief of Police John Poleway.

In 1976, Larchmont police were notified that a young man was walking erratically alongside train tracks. When Patrolman Arthur Dematte responded to check on his safety, Anthony Blanks grabbed his revolver and shot the officer to death before taking off in his police cruiser.

“Anthony Blanks is a cold-blooded killer who turned on a heroic officer who was dispatched out of concern for his safety,” said Senator Marty Golden. “Why should he be released back into our communities where he poses a risk to the safety of our officers and our families? The Parole Board needs to deny the release of this dangerous criminal.”

“Patrolman Dematte was given no second chance at life; his sentence at the hand of Anthony Blanks was swift and enduring. His actions on that day long ago left a wife without a

husband, children without a father, and fellow officers without a friend and partner,” said Larchmont Chief of Police John Poleway. “Each time Anthony Blanks is eligible for parole, the family is once again victimized and the Police Department relives this tragedy. Neither Anthony Blanks, nor any other individual who causes the death of a police officer, should ever be eligible for parole.”

"Anthony Blanks robbed four young children of their father, a loving wife of her husband, and a community of a dedicated police officer," said former Larchmont Mayor Liz Feld. "He committed the most heinous crime imaginable. Mr. Blanks should remain in prison where he can pose no threat to anyone else"

“Mr. Blanks took a father from his four young children and a husband from his wife. It may seem that after 34 years, our family would have “recovered” from our loss and moved on. This is not, nor will it ever be true,” said Jane Dematte. “Each time our family celebrates a milestone, we feel anger and sadness that our father/husband is not present. He was not present for his children’s graduations, weddings, or the birth of his grandchildren. We still feel his absence as we watch each of his grandchildren attain these same milestones. Granting him parole sends the wrong message about how we value the men and women who risk their lives to keep us safe.”

Two weeks ago, the Parole Board voted 2-1 to grant parole to cop killer Shuaib Raheem. Raheem was involved in a botched armed robbery in Williamsburg, NY in 1973, which resulted in the death of Patrolman Stephen Gilroy and injured Patrolman Frank Carpentier.

Last week, after pressure from Senate Republicans and police organizations, cop killer John MacKenzie, who opened fire during a burglary in West Hempstead in 1975 and killed Nassau County Police Officer Matthew Giglio, was denied parole.

“Last week, our voices were heard and we are here today to ensure that the Parole Board makes the right decision when Anthony Blanks comes before them tomorrow morning, and they keep him behind bars where he belongs for the rest of his life,” said Senator Golden.

“New York’s most violent criminals must not be released back into our neighborhoods where they can once again threaten the lives and safety of innocent people,” said Senator Andrew Lanza. “Unfortunately, it seems as though current misguided policies are in fact releasing dangerous. The stakes are simply too high not to fix this problem immediately.”

The Senate Republicans highlighted the release of Raheem as the most recent in a series of soft-on-crime measures pushed through by New York Democrats in recent years that focus on protecting our criminals rather than our communities.

After assuming office in 2008, former Governor Spitzer settled a lawsuit brought by prisoners who claimed they were constantly being denied parole. The Spitzer administration allowed A-1 felons an extra parole hearing and allowed their lawyers to choose the Parole Board members to hear their cases.

Data released by the State Division of Parole showed that A-1 violent felons appearing for the first time before the Parole Board were being released at a rate 180% higher than during Governor George Pataki’s last term in office.

In 2009, the Governor and Democrats in the Legislature tucked a number of measures into the budget to make it easier for inmates to get out on parole. They:

- Provided more credit to inmates to reduce their sentences of incarceration;
- Made it easier for inmates to get out of prison by claiming to be debilitated;

- Directed Parole to focus on “graduated sanctions” for parolees including approaches that concentrate supervision on new releases and alternatives to incarceration for technical parole violators;
- Allowed the sealing of records of arrest, prosecution and conviction of marijuana drug users and dealers if the convicted person completed a drug treatment program;
- Allowed light sentences (less than 1 year) for drug dealers and major drug traffickers.

In addition, the Democrats in control of the Legislature have blocked nearly every effort by Senate Republicans to hold violent felons, drug dealers and sex offenders accountable, blocking nearly 200 crime-related bills passed by Republicans when they were in control of the Senate in 2008.