



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Terrence Murphy

The Bell Tolls: Murphy and Fellow Senators Say NO to Releasing Cop Killer

[Terrence Murphy](#)

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Albany, NY - Forty-five years ago, a trio of men called the police department with a bogus emergency. Having sprung their malicious trap, the three men lay in wait to ambush and kill the police officers who responded to the call.

One of those three men, former Black Liberation Army member Herman Bell, is up for parole. On January 29, Senator Terrence Murphy, who has championed and supported our men and women in blue, stood shoulder to shoulder with a group of his fellow Senators to angrily protest the possibility of Bell's release. Bell has been up for parole every two years since 2004, and his next parole hearing is scheduled for next month. His hearing in February will mark his seventh appearance before the parole board.

Senator Murphy joined Senator Martin Golden, a retired NYPD officer and Senator Fred Akshar, former Broome County Undersheriff, at a press conference in Albany on January 30 organized by Senator Patrick Gallivan, a former NYS Trooper, Sheriff of Erie County, member of the NYS Board of Parole and Chair of the Senate Crime and Corrections Committee. Supported by representatives from various law enforcement agencies, the Senators aired their concerns and urged the public to sign an online petition calling on the Board of Parole to deny Bell's release. The online petition is available at <http://www.noparoleforhermanbell.com/> .

"No one should ever have to relive the nightmare of losing a loved one in the

manner that these officers lost their lives," said Senator Murphy. "There should be no parole, period, for anyone who kills a law enforcement officer. Bell set these officers up, intending to kill them. It is disgraceful that we are even talking about paroling him. Bell should never be allowed out of jail."

Senator Gallivan stated, "This was an especially heinous crime and the release of Herman Bell would be an affront to all law-abiding citizens. An attack on a police officer is an attack on a community. Such disregard for the rule of law shows an incompatibility with the welfare of society. His release from jail would minimize the lives of law enforcement officers everywhere who have dedicated their lives to keeping our communities safe."

"Allowing this unrepentant individual to get back on the streets would pose a danger to the 19- and-a-half million people living in New York," said Senator Golden.

"Herman Bell showed no mercy when he murdered Police Officers Joseph Piagentini and Waverly Jones. It is an injustice to the memory of these brave officers and an insult to their grieving families to even consider his release. He should never see the light of day. I encourage everyone to sign the petition to keep Herman Bell behind bars for the rest of his life."

"Herman Bell helped lure, ambush and sadistically murder two public servants simply because of the police uniforms they wore," said Senator Akshar. "That kind of evil has no place in our society and I strongly urge the parole board to keep Mr. Bell behind bars where he belongs. Officer Waverly Jones, Officer Joseph Piagentini, and their families were forever denied living the rest of their lives together. It seems more than fair that Mr. Bell live the rest of his life in prison."

On May 21, 1971, Bell, Anthony Bottom and Albert Washington lured police officers Joseph Piagentini and Waverly Jones to the Colonial Park Houses on W. 159th St., ambushing them. Jones was shot in the head and died instantly. Piagentini begged for his life, telling Bell and his cohorts that he had a wife and two children at home, but the three suspects ignored his pleas and took their time killing Piagentini - shooting him 22 times.

Bell was arrested about a year later. Bell was also implicated in the August 1971 murder of a police officer in San Francisco and convicted of voluntary manslaughter. All three suspects were convicted of the two murders and sentenced to 25 years to

life in 1979. Washington died in prison. Bottom has a parole hearing scheduled for June.

During his parole hearings, Bell has claimed the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. drew him to the Black Panthers and the Black Liberation Army, which led him down a path to murder.

Relatives of the slain cops are split on whether Bell should remain behind bars. While Piagentini's widow wants Bell to remain incarcerated, Jones' son Waverly Jones Jr. has said in the past that Bell should be released.