

Senator Pam Helming

Representing the 54th New York Senate District



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Sen. Helming Seeks Public’s Help to Deny Early Release of Vicious Murderer

GENEVA – Senator Pam Helming today announced that she has posted a petition at helming.nysenate.gov and is asking the public to sign the petition to help keep convicted killer Chad Campbell behind bars. Campbell is serving a maximum sentence of life in prison for the murders of a classmate and the toddler boy she was babysitting. He is eligible for parole in May.

Earlier this year, Senator Helming sent a letter to the New York State Parole Board opposing Campbell’s early release and demanding that he be kept in prison for the entire length of his life sentence. Copies of the petition will be delivered to the parole board at the end of this month.

In August 1990, Campbell – then 14 years old – brutally stabbed to death Cindy Lewis, his 15-year-old Palmyra-Macedon Central School District classmate, and Curtis Rizzo, the 17-month-old boy she was babysitting. Though he has been eligible for parole five times since 2008 and will be eligible again next month, Campbell has previously been denied an early release because he has shown no remorse for these heinous crimes. Rather than take responsibility for himself and his actions, he chooses to blame his upbringing for his reprehensible actions. Campbell’s horrific actions have caused irreparable harm to the community where he committed this terrible violence and unspeakable anguish to the family and friends of those he murdered.

“When Chad Campbell chose to kill two innocent children by repeatedly stabbing them over and over again, in my opinion, he forfeited his right to live outside prison walls. Cindy and Curtis did not have the chance to live out their lives, and their families have endured years of suffering and pain. Why should Campbell be granted an opportunity to live freely? By releasing Campbell, who has reportedly shown no remorse for his actions, will the parole board be jeopardizing public safety? I am asking the public to sign my petition so that together we can send a clear message to the New York State Parole Board that Campbell should not be released from prison; not now and not ever,” Senator Helming said.

Wayne County Sheriff Barry Virts said, “Chad Campbell viciously knifed to death both Cindy Lewis (age 15) and Curtis Rizzo (a 17-month-old baby boy) in the Village of Palmyra in August of 1990. Campbell has never taken responsibility for his murderous actions. In my judgement, Campbell should never be released from prison. Campbell denied teenager Cindy and baby Curtis a life to live because of his brutal and monstrous actions in killing them.”

Former Palmyra Village Police Chief David Dalton, who originally investigated the murder, said, “I wholeheartedly support any and all efforts to see that Chad Campbell is never released from prison. This crime shook the Village of Palmyra and its residents to their core, some of whom, besides the families of the victims, will never recover from it. Chad Campbell should never set foot outside of prison walls for the rest of his life. His inability to take responsibility for his actions in the past speaks for itself. Any change would be, in my estimation, only self-serving on his part.”

Along with her efforts to advocate that Campbell remain in prison, Senator Helming has worked with Curtis Rizzo’s grandmother, Elaine Hartnagel, to support bills in the State Senate that would help victims and their families during parole board hearings. One measure (S.2997-A) would lengthen the time between parole hearings from two years to five years. This would give grieving families a greater period of peace before having to relive their tragedies while testifying at the next hearing. Another measure (S.6200) would allow all family members and interested parties to make statements during hearings in order to create a more open and fair process for victims’ families and all those affected by the crime. For example, grandparents such as Ms. Hartnagel are currently not given the chance to speak before the parole board.

“My family and I tremendously appreciate the overwhelming support that Senator Helming has shown us through her efforts to keep a vicious convicted killer in prison and off our streets as well as to pass legislation aimed at providing relief for the families of crime victims. Though nothing we can do will ever bring back Curtis and Cindy or take away the pain that we feel every day from their loss, the support of people like Senator Helming means so much to us. I will continue to do all I can to make sure this monster never sees a day outside prison walls, and I thank Senator Helming for her advocacy on behalf of us and other families of victims. I urge everyone to join us in this fight by signing the petition and sending a message to the parole board,” said Elaine Hartnagel, grandmother of Curtis Rizzo.

Both of these bills passed the Senate with wide bipartisan support last year and were re-introduced for this year’s legislative session. Senator Helming is a co-sponsor on both pieces of legislation.

“I have seen and heard firsthand the pain and suffering that Ms. Hartnagel and her family still feel over the loss of their beloved Curtis and his babysitter Cindy – lives that were cut tragically short 28 years ago. Ms. Hartnagel and her family bear the burden of reliving this real-life nightmare every two years when Chad Campbell is eligible for parole, and even then, not all of the family members are permitted to testify to ensure that this atrocious murderer is never released into society. I look forward to working with my Senate colleagues to pass these two measures this year, and I am hopeful the Assembly and the Governor will do the same so that we can bring justice to victims and their families,” Senator Helming said.

Senator Helming represents the 54th Senate District, which consists of Seneca and Wayne Counties, parts of Cayuga and Ontario Counties, and the towns of Lansing and Webster. For more information, please visit Senator Helming’s [website](#), or follow @SenatorHelming on Facebook or Twitter.

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