



GOVERNOR GREG ABBOTT

January 4, 2023

The Honorable Dan Patrick
Lieutenant Governor of Texas
P.O. Box 2910
Austin, Texas 78711

The Honorable Dade Phelan
Speaker of the Texas House of Representatives
P.O. Box 2910
Austin, Texas 78768

Dear Lieutenant Governor Patrick and Speaker Phelan:

On December 19, 2022, I sent a letter to the Texas Board of Pardons and Paroles and the Texas Department of Criminal Justice directing them to investigate any lapses that occurred relating to the brutal murders committed by two former inmates who were released on parole and ordered to wear ankle monitors. Nestor Hernandez took the lives of two victims at Dallas Methodist Hospital, and Zeric Jackson shot and killed a victim at a home in Lake Highlands. It is clear that the ankle monitors, a condition of their parole, were not effective in deterring or otherwise preventing these individuals from going on to commit violent crimes, resulting in three innocent lives being lost.

In response to the letter I sent, the agencies provided me with the attached report. In summary, the Board of Pardons and Paroles determined that discretionary actions taken by their parole panel in determining release and addressing violations were consistent with their respective board rules, policies, and statutory authority. The Texas Department of Criminal Justice has taken steps in the form of administrative action and a comprehensive review of supervision policies to focus on preventing tragedies like these from happening again.

Based on the report, it is clear that legislative action is needed. Currently, there are no criminal consequences for a parolee cutting off an ankle monitor. This is an administrative violation only, and while it results in the issuance of an arrest warrant for the violation, it does not carry its own set of criminal consequences. Moreover, if a parolee under the Super Intensive Supervision Program violates their parole conditions and a warrant is issued, law enforcement should be required to prioritize the arrest and apprehension of that individual.

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Texas cannot allow violent criminals who jeopardize public safety back into our communities. I look forward to working with you to accomplish these changes and other legislative initiatives that will keep our fellow citizens safe.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Greg Abbott". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Greg Abbott
Governor

GA:sm