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**Attorney General Steve Marshall Represents the State of Alabama at Parole Hearing and Speaks in Forceful Opposition to the Release of Jimmy O’Neal Spencer from Prison**

*Spencer Case Continues to Highlight Fatal Flaws in Alabama’s Criminal Laws That Demand Immediate Attention and Action by the Legislature*

(MONTGOMERY) – Attorney General Steve Marshall attended the hearing held by the Alabama Board of Pardons and Paroles on Tuesday morning, voicing his and the State of Alabama’s strong opposition to the release of Jimmy O’Neal Spencer from prison.\*

The Board voted to deny Spencer’s parole.

Jimmy O’Neal Spencer, 56, is a violent career criminal with an extensive arrest record spanning several decades and comprising numerous felonies. He first went to prison in the early 1980s, and continued to commit crime after crime in the years that followed, both inside and outside of custody. In 1989, after committing a burglary and being sentenced as a habitual offender for his repeat felony convictions, Spencer received his first life-in-prison sentence. In 1993, after escaping from custody and committing a number of other crimes while on the run, Spencer received his second life-in-prison sentence.

Despite serving two life sentences and posing a clear and present danger to public safety, Spencer was granted parole by the previous Board in 2018. Shortly thereafter, Spencer absconded from supervision and murdered Martha Reliford, 65, Marie Martin, 74, and Colton Lee, 7, in Marshall County. He has been charged with capital murder and is awaiting trial.

“I am pleased that the Board has denied Jimmy Spencer parole for the crimes for which he is currently serving two life sentences,” said Attorney General Marshall. “But his case continues to highlight fatal flaws in Alabama’s criminal laws. Under no circumstance should a man serving two life sentences and awaiting trial on three capital-murder charges ever be eligible for parole.



“We must strengthen Alabama’s criminal laws, which—as cases like this and those of Austin Patrick Hall illustrate—are too promiscuous with regard to public safety. I plan to work with the Legislature to correct that, to the end of keeping violent criminals incarcerated and innocent citizens safe.”

In 2019, the tragedy that ensued following the parole of Jimmy O’Neal Spencer led Attorney General Marshall, along with Governor Ivey, to work with the Legislature to reform the badly broken Alabama Board of Pardons and Paroles. That effort has been a success, significantly overhauling the institution and increasing the safety of the people of Alabama. However, Attorney General Marshall has been clear and consistent that Alabama’s criminal laws are also in vital need of reform, as Spencer’s newest opportunity for parole aptly illustrates.

*\* Photographs of Attorney General Steve Marshall speaking at today’s parole hearing for Jimmy O’Neal Spencer can be downloaded at [this link](#).*