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Governor Commutes Sentence of Brutal Aggravated Murderer
Democrats silent once again

SALEM, Ore. – On Friday, Marion County District Attorney Paige Clarkson and Sheriff Joe Kast issued a public safety notice about the Governor’s release of a man serving a life sentence for aggravated murder.

“As with many others, the facts of this case are outrageous and brutal,” said Senate Republican Leader Tim Knopp (R-Bend). “The Governor continues to let violent criminals out of prison, and Democrats in the majority remain silent. The only time they have taken a position was to kill Senate Republicans’ legislation to check the Governor’s overreaching authority to stop releases like this one.”

Nikki Thrasher was murdered by recently released Kyle Hedquist in 1994. He convinced her into driving to a remote location in Douglas County where he proceed to execute her.

Over the objections of Douglas County DA, Richard Wesenburg, the Governor decided to release Hedquist to live in Marion County. In addition to the life sentence for murder, he was also serving 80 months for robbery and kidnapping.

“The Governor is making a habit of releasing violent criminals back into Marion County,” said Senator Kim Thatcher (R-Keizer). “The families of Headquist’s victims were promised by our justice system that this man would be in prison for life. But the Governor has single-handedly reneged on that promise. This week is Crime Victims Rights’ Week. I cannot think of a worse way to honor those who have been impacted by crime than releasing their offenders from prison. These decisions are dangerous, and the legislature must respond to this overreach by passing common-sense oversight reforms. No one person should have all this power.”

Majority Democrats continue to ignore Oregonians' concerns over rising violent crime caused by defunding police and continue to make it more difficult for police officers to protect Oregonians. As DA Clarkson and Sherrif Kast mentioned in their public safety notice, this decision makes the jobs of Oregon’s dedicated public safety officials more dangerous and difficult.

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