

FAQs With Answers

Handout at July 22, 2025 Press Conference — Ralph Menzies Case **Utah Board of Pardons and Parole**

1. Why can the Board grant a commutation hearing for Ralph Menzies?

After a death warrant is signed, Utah law allows that person seven days to petition the Board of Pardons and Parole for a commutation hearing. The State then has seven days to respond to the petition, and the Board will review both the petition and response to determine if there are genuine issues that should be addressed in a commutation hearing.

2. Can you share the vote count or deliberation details?

No. Under Utah statute, Board deliberations are confidential, and individual votes are not public record. All Board decisions require a majority consensus.

3. Can the victim's family participate in the commutation hearing?

If the Board grants a commutation hearing, the victim's family will be provided the opportunity to provide written and/or verbal testimony during the hearing.

4. How do you respond to concerns about fairness or bias?

The Board is committed to impartiality, transparency, and due process. Every individual receives a fair hearing, regardless of public opinion or media attention. Decisions are based on law and evidence.

5. Will political influence or public pressure affect the Board's decision to grant a commutation hearing?

No. The Utah Board of Pardons and Parole is an independent body. The decision to grant or deny a commutation hearing will be based on whether there are genuine issues raised in the petition that should be addressed in a hearing. The Board does not consult with or receive direction from elected officials.

6. What legal standard will be used in deciding to grant a commutation hearing?

At the time of Mr. Menzies' original sentencing, Utah law granted the Board the discretion to grant or deny a commutation petition. The Board will apply this legal standard and will only consider issues raised in the petition for a hearing.

7. Can the Board consider competency when making a decision about commutation?

In deciding whether to grant a commutation hearing, the Board can only consider issues raised in the petition. As the Board considers the issues raised it will look for genuine issues that should be addressed in a hearing. The Board will not relitigate what has already been litigated in courts.

8. How much discretion does the Board have when considering commuting a death sentence to life without parole?

The Board's authority to commute a death sentence is limited due to the separation of powers between the judicial (Courts) and executive (Board) branches. Both state constitution and statute impose these limits to prevent encroachment on each other's domain.

9. What support is being offered to the victim's family now?

The Board remains committed to engaging with the victim's family in a respectful and transparent manner. Our office has set up communication with family members to ensure they are informed at every step in the process.

10. How do you respond to anti-death penalty advocates?

We respect differing views on capital punishment. However, the role of the Board is not to debate the death penalty; it is to follow the law.

11. Is there any chance of a stay or appeal that could delay the execution?

Any questions about legal appeals or stays would be under the jurisdiction of the courts. The Board does not interfere in judicial matters. As of now, the execution remains scheduled.

12. How does the Board manage the personal toll of these decisions?

These decisions are never taken lightly. Board members, as well as staff involved in the processing of this case, are deeply aware of the gravity and emotional weight of their responsibilities.