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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Parole Denied for Prison Gang Member Who Murdered Another Inmate
CDC #AV8768; Kern County Court Case #SC015290C

District Attorney Cynthia Zimmer announced that the California Board of Parole Hearings (BPH) denied release to convicted murderer Gilbert Luke Newsome. On June 6, 2024, BPH found that Newsome continued to pose a current and unreasonable risk to public safety. Representing the District Attorney's Office was Deputy District Attorney Gina Nargie.

On July 31, 2009, Newsome and other prison gang members beat a new inmate, Jerry Cook, at Wasco State Prison. The victim was reported to be older and frail at the time of his murder due to possible illness. As a result of being severely beaten, the victim fell into a vegetative coma for two months and died as a result of blunt force trauma. Witnesses reported seeing Newsome repeatedly "stomping" the victim in the head. Witnesses heard the victim saying he didn't understand and that he didn't even know these inmates.

On May 5, 2014, a Kern County Jury found Newsome guilty of murder in the second degree and found true that he had served three prior prison terms where he failed to remain free from custody for five years. On February 6, 2016, a Kern County Judge sentenced Newsome to 15 years to life, plus an additional 3 years in state prison.

On June 6, 2024, the BPH conducted Newsome's initial parole hearing. At the parole hearing, the commissioners focused on Newsome's gang involvement in prison, the motive for the murder, substance abuse and mental health treatment, and his institutional behavior. The Kern County District Attorney's Office asked the BPH to deny parole. The BPH found that Newsome was not suitable for parole and posed a current unreasonable risk of danger to society. The Board of Parole has the option of denying an inmate parole for a period of 15, 10, 7, 5 or 3 years. Newsome's commissioners issued a five-year denial.

District Attorney Cynthia Zimmer commented; “Every murder victim will receive advocacy, regardless of whether they are an inmate or not. Newsome's repeated encounters with the law presents a substantial risk to public safety, making it important for our office to oppose his parole.”