

December 17, 2009

To Whom It May Concern:

On Sunday December 6, 2009, Penn Hills Police Officer Michael Crawshaw was shot and killed by Ronald Robinson, a career criminal who was on parole and wearing an electronic monitoring device at the time of this crime. The system failed Officer Crawshaw and changes must be made.

During the past four years, 11 law enforcement officers have been shot and killed in Pennsylvania. In Allegheny County alone, in just 13 months, five law enforcement officers have been killed. In the most recent example of this senseless violence, Officer Michael Crawshaw was murdered by Ronald Robinson, who like the other offenders described below, exhibited a blatant disregard for human life, the police, and the rule of law. In Robinson's case, he had multiple prior convictions and was serving a 2 1/2 - 5 year sentence when the parole board approved his parole. Robinson repeatedly violated the conditions of his parole after he was released. In November 2008 FBI Agent Sam Hicks was shot and killed while serving an arrest warrant on Robert Korbe. In December of 2005, Pennsylvania State Police Cpl. Joseph Pokorny was shot and killed by Leslie Mollett during a traffic stop in Carnegie. During a 16 month period between November 2007 and February 2009, Philadelphia Police Officers Charles Cassidy, John Pawloski, Sgt. Stephen Liczinski and Sgt. Patrick McDonald were all shot and killed by violent repeat offenders with multiple felony convictions.

We are contacting you because the system has failed these officers (along with countless others) and it is time for a change. There are enough random acts of violence by individuals without criminal records, as evidenced by the April 4, 2009 murder of Pittsburgh Police Officers, Paul Sciallo II, Stephen J. Mayhle, and Eric G. Kelly, that career criminals should not be added to society. You, as our representatives, have been elected to create a system that will not only protect the citizens but also the brave men and women who make a career of protecting us. We need your help to bring about this change and not let the death of these dedicated officers be in vain. The laws you have already enacted need to be enforced in the way they were intended and people must be held accountable for their actions. Returning repeat or violent offenders to the streets only results in continued criminal activity which escalates to the point where we are now. The guidelines for determining who gets released need to be re-examined and consideration for release should not be given to those who have shown a general disregard for human life.

Police officers and their families realize that law enforcement is a dangerous profession and that there are risks involved; we willingly accept those risks. In return, we expect the legislature and judiciary to act responsibly by enacting meaningful legislation and imposing real penalties for violation of those laws. Please do your part to prevent more senseless tragedy and to keep another family from suffering a loss such as this one.

Sincerely,