



NATIONAL FRATERNAL ORDER OF POLICE®

328 MASSACHUSETTS AVE., N.E.
WASHINGTON, DC 20002

PATRICK YOES
NATIONAL PRESIDENT

JIM PASCO
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The Honorable Mark Keating
Chairman, Prisoner Review Board
Kansas Department of Corrections
714 SW Jackson, Suite 300
Topeka, KS 66603

12 May 2025

Dear Mr. Chairman,

I am writing on behalf of the members of the National Fraternal Order of Police to advise you of our vehement opposition to the recent decision of the Prisoner Review Board to grant parole to Jimmie K. Nelms, a brutal cop-killer who was sentenced to life in prison for the murder of Kansas State Trooper Conroy O'Brien in 1978.

On 24 May 1978, Trooper O'Brien was conducting a routine traffic stop on the Kansas Turnpike. After speaking with the driver, Walter Myrick, he returned to his patrol car to write a speeding ticket. Nelms, his killer, approached Trooper O'Brien with a firearm, forced him out of the car and into a ditch. He stripped the trooper of his firearm, pistol-whipped him with it, and fractured his skull. He then shot Trooper O'Brien twice in the head. The men then fled the scene and were ultimately apprehended following a pursuit and a gunfight with Trooper Charlie Smith later that day. Trooper O'Brien is survived by his wife and unborn daughter, whom he never had the chance to meet.

At the time, the death penalty was not an option for the prosecution, so Nelms and Myrick were sentenced to two life sentences for aggravated kidnapping and murder. Myrick died in prison in 2009 and that should also be the fate of Nelms, who killed Trooper O'Brien in cold blood. This cop-killer was denied parole in 2011 and 2021, making the decision of you and the Prisoner Review Board all the more inexplicable. The statement that this murderer is "willing to fulfill the obligations of a law-abiding citizen" is disrespectful to the family of Trooper O'Brien and every law enforcement officer in Kansas and the United States. Any person who murders a cop has forfeited their opportunity to fulfill any obligations outside the prison walls.

The National Fraternal Order of Police stands with the Kansas State FOP Lodge and the Kansas State Trooper Association, and we support the call from Governor Laura Kelly to review and reverse this decision. Trooper O'Brien's killer was sentenced to life in prison, and that is exactly what he should serve. To release him would be a travesty of justice and would dishonor Trooper O'Brien's sacrifice and that of every other law enforcement officer who puts his or her life on the line to protect their communities and our nation.

On behalf of the more than 377,000 members of the Fraternal Order of Police, we demand this decision be immediately overturned and that the Prisoner Review Board affirm the life sentence of this brutal cop-killer. If I can be of any help or provide additional information on the FOP's stance on this matter, please do not hesitate to contact me or Executive Director Jim Pasco in our Washington, D.C. office.

Sincerely,

Patrick Yoes
National President

cc: The Honorable Jeannie Wark, Board Member, Prisoner Review Board
The Honorable Carolyn Perez, Board Member, Prisoner Review Board
The Honorable Laura Kelly, Governor, State of Kansas
Amanda Wood, President, Kansas State Lodge
KC Blodgett, National Trustee, Kansas State Lodge

-- BUILDING ON A PROUD TRADITION --

