



J. HANLEY

WINNEBAGO COUNTY STATE'S ATTORNEY

September 11, 2026

Mr. Jim Montgomery, Executive Director
Illinois Prisoner Review Board
319 E. Madison Street, Suite A
Springfield, IL 62701
Sent via email: PRB.MedicalRelease@Illinois.gov

Dear executive Director Montgomery,

The Office of the State's Attorney strongly objects to William Buck's (#R21689) request for Medical Release, docket number MR0525.

While the deadline for submitting a response is listed as September 11, 2026, the undersigned was not provided an accurate copy of the application until September 9, 2026. As such, the Office of the State's Attorney respectfully requests an opportunity to supplement its response. Below is a preliminary representation of the State's Attorney's position.

WILLIAM BUCK'S CRIMINAL HISTORY

On March 1, 1994, Buck committed two counts of aggravated battery, obstructing a peace officer, and criminal damage to property. He was adjudicated delinquent of those offenses and placed on two years of probation on April 4, 1994. Four months later, on August 20, 1994, Buck committed the offense of possession with intent to deliver a controlled substance. Buck was again adjudicated delinquent and placed on probation until his 17th birthday, April 6, 1999.

On April 4, 1995, Buck committed his first murder. At 12 years old, Buck shot and killed Andrew Polkowski in the back with a handgun. He was adjudicated delinquent and committed to the Illinois Department of Corrections on April 14, 1995.

Buck was released from the Department of Corrections in April of 2001. Buck enjoyed freedom for less than 4 months before he took his next life.

THE MURDER OF KEVIN RICE

On August 3, 2001, William Buck and Vincent Holmes decided they wanted to rob someone or steal a car. The two of them stalked down Hoban Avenue perusing parked vehicles. Holmes tried to break a car's window with a rock. Buck hid behind a bush and said he would



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shoot anyone who might approach. After failing to steal the car, they continued walking on Hoban.

Rockford Police Detective Kevin Rice was driving to his home on Hoban Avenue when he spotted Buck and Holmes walking in the street. Kevin pulled up to the men and asked them what business they had in the area. William Buck immediately drew a pistol and emptied the magazine into Kevin's car. Buck shot Kevin five times in the head and neck. Buck fled the scene.

At the scene, officers located an inhaler, a sweatshirt, and a set of keys. Officers made copies of the keys and swept the area. The keys were matched to an apartment two blocks away. The occupant of that apartment indicated that William Buck stayed there occasionally and would have had a key. A neighbor witnessed a man fleeing from the area and provided a description that matched Buck. DNA testing established that Buck's DNA was on the inhaler and sweatshirt. The sweatshirt also tested positive for the presence of gunshot residue. When Buck was eventually arrested, he confessed to pulling the trigger and killing Kevin Rice. The evidence at trial showed that Buck believed Kevin to be a police officer and shot Kevin to thwart investigation into his ongoing criminal activity.

A Lake County jury was brought to Winnebago County to hear the case. The jury found Buck guilty of first-degree murder, and he was sentenced to 60 years in the department of corrections on June 3, 2003. At the sentencing hearing, the trial court was asked to consider the statements of Kevin's wife and children. Those statements are attached.

While serving his sentence for the murder of Kevin Rice, Buck committed the offense of Aggravated Battery to a Peace Officer on June 16, 2017. He was convicted and sentenced to nine years in the Illinois Department of Corrections.

THE REQUEST FOR RELEASE SHOULD BE DENIED

Buck's application offers remarkably little to justify the extraordinary relief he requests. He was asked to provide a complete and detailed account of his own version of the circumstances surrounding Kevin Rice's murder. Instead, Buck states only that his conviction "stems from the August 3, 2001, fatal shooting of an off-duty Rockford Police Department detective." This woefully dismissive description strips the murder of virtually every fact demonstrating its gravity and Buck's culpability. Rather than confronting what he did, Buck characteristically minimizes his role in this tragedy. His failure to meaningfully acknowledge the



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circumstances of the murder provides little reason to conclude that he appreciates the gravity of his actions or should now be relieved of their consequences.

Nor does Buck provide meaningful information demonstrating why his present circumstances warrant release. He was invited to provide information concerning his life history, education, substance abuse, mental health, rehabilitative efforts, and life-changing events. He provided none. He offers no meaningful discussion of rehabilitation, no explanation of how he has changed, and no meaningful consideration of a parole plan or his future outside the Department of Corrections. Buck simply requests release while providing the Board little reason to exercise its mercy in his favor.

The medical information provided does not change that conclusion. The conditions identified in Buck's application are commonly associated with degenerative changes and aging. Standing alone, the conditions do not establish incapacitation. Buck does not demonstrate that he suffers from severe functional limitations or that institutional confinement no longer imposes any meaningful restriction upon him. Nothing in the materials provided to the State demonstrates that Buck's medical condition has rendered continued incarceration unnecessary or unjust.

These omissions are particularly significant because Buck's history reveals an extraordinary and persistent danger to others. Buck's violent conduct began when he was very young. At 12 years old, he attacked teachers and police officers, began dealing cocaine, and murdered Andrew Polkowski with a firearm. Buck was eventually given an extraordinary opportunity to return to society. Yet less than four months after his release, he obtained another firearm, set out to commit additional crimes indiscriminately, and murdered Kevin Rice. Even decades of incarceration did not completely quell Buck's violent tendencies. In 2017, while imprisoned, he committed another aggravated battery against a peace officer.

Few criminal histories more clearly demonstrate the need for severe punishment and continued incarceration. Society must be protected from William Buck. In the brief periods when Buck possessed meaningful control over his own freedom, he repeatedly used that freedom to harm others. Society has compelling reason to remain protected from William Buck, and nothing in his present application demonstrates that his physical condition has rendered that protection unnecessary.

The sentence imposed by the trial court reflected precisely these concerns. In fashioning Buck's sentence, the court considered the brutality of the murder, Buck's horrific criminal history, and the devastating harm he caused to Kevin Rice's family and the community. Despite serving less than half of the sentence imposed, Buck now appears to rely upon the physical



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consequences of aging as a basis to shorten that sentence. However, the sentencing court necessarily understood that a 60-year sentence would require Buck to grow old in prison. Medical release should not become a mechanism to reweigh circumstances inherent in the sentence imposed. Buck has not demonstrated an extraordinary change in circumstances that would make continued incarceration inconsistent with the purposes of that sentence. Buck's sentence remains just.

The passage of time has not diminished the devastation Buck caused. When Buck murdered Kevin Rice, he did not take only one life. He deprived Kevin's wife of her husband, his children of their father, his family and friends of someone they loved, and this community of a dedicated public servant. Those losses were permanent. Kevin's loved ones have been required to carry the consequences of Buck's decision for more than two decades, through every milestone, every family gathering, and every year Kevin should have remained part of their lives. Buck now asks for relief from the direct consequences of his actions, but the consequences he imposed upon Kevin and his loved ones can never be undone.

For these reasons, the People object to William Buck's release, and respectfully request that the Board deny his request.

Sincerely,

/s/ J. Hanley

J. Hanley

State's Attorney of Winnebago County

Luke Ranard

Assistant State's Attorney

o/b/o