



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patrick M. Gallivan

Senator Gallivan Delivers Petitions Calling on Board of Parole to Deny Release of Herman Bell

JIM RANNEY February 22, 2018

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Senator Patrick M. Gallivan (R-C-I, Elma) announces a petition containing 3,992 signatures has been delivered to the New York State Board of Parole, urging members to deny the release from prison of Herman Bell, one of three men convicted in the 1971 murder of two New York City police officers. Bell's parole hearing is expected to be held as soon as today.

Gallivan, a former NYS Trooper, Sheriff of Erie County and member of the NYS Board of Parole, launched the petition drive last month with the help of Senator Martin Golden (R-C-I, Brooklyn), a retired NYPD officer, and Senator Fred Akshar (R-C-I, Colesville), former Broome County Undersheriff. Several other Legislative colleagues also supported the effort.

On May 21, 1971, Officers Joseph Piagentini and Waverly Jones were shot and killed after being lured to a Harlem housing project by a bogus 911 call. Officer Jones died instantly from a gunshot to the head. Officer Piagentini, who begged for his life, was shot 22 times by the suspects and died on his way to the hospital.

Bell, Anthony Bottom and Albert Washington were convicted and sentenced to 25 years to life in prison in 1979. Bottom has a parole hearing set for June. Washington died in prison.

“Residents from across New York State recognize that the release of Herman Bell would be an affront to police officers and all law abiding citizens,” Gallivan said. “If Bell were convicted today, he would be sentenced to life in prison without parole. I urge the Board of Parole to consider the heinous nature of this crime and deny the release of Herman Bell.”

The petition effort also had the support of several law enforcement agencies and organizations, including the NYC PBA, NYS Troopers PBA, NYS Police Investigators Association, the Police Benevolent Association of NYS, and Council 82, AFSCME, AFL-CIO.