

MESSAGE FROM PROSECUTOR SHERRI BEVAN WALSH

Contact: Laurie Cramer
(330) 643-2800

Lagway's case referred for review by Ohio Parole Board

(February 22, 2010, Akron) ... Summit County Prosecutor Sherri Bevan Walsh today announced that serial rapist Willie Lagway's parole has yet to be decided. After a hearing today at the institution, a parole board member referred the case for a Central Office Board Review (COBR).

A COBR hearing is required with all sex offenses and is when all members of the Ohio Parole Board participate in the parole decision. A decision on whether to release Lagway requires a majority (or four members) to vote to release Lagway.

Prosecutor Sherri Bevan Walsh, who has been working to oppose Lagway's release along with his victims, said "We will wait for the Ohio Parole Board to make their decision and hope that they have heard the many citizens of Summit County who have signed petitions and written letters opposing his release. Lagway has a very high risk of raping again and if he had been sentenced under today's Truth in Sentencing Laws, the parole board would not even be considering his release."

The Board is expected to review the case within the next couple of months and will announce its decision at that time. If the decision is made to allow his release, the victims can request a "full board" hearing in Columbus, where they can appear and testify against his release in front of the board.

Background: In February 1983, this inmate went on a five-day crime spree victimizing six women in Summit County. Lagway kidnapped his victims from various locations in Summit County, including the parking decks at area hospitals. All of the victims were robbed and two were raped. Lagway was armed with a knife that he used to threaten the first four victims with their lives if they did not comply with his demands. In his last abduction of two women who were together, he told them he had a gun. Lagway did not just commit these crimes and leave. He terrorized these women for hours, looking at their drivers' licenses to get their addresses, and asking them other personal information.

Lagway was tried and convicted in 1983 by a jury. The case was overturned on appeal and all six victims went through a second trial in 1993. Again, a jury convicted Lagway. For his crimes, the sentencing Judge gave Lagway the maximum possible sentence of 109 to 375 years in prison.