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August 10, 2018

Board of Parole Hearings
Attn: Nonviolent Parole Review Process
P.O. Box 4036
Sacramento, CA 95812-4036

**Re: Inmate Laura Leesha Means, CDCR WF0909
Ventura County Superior Court Case 2010021196
Opposition Letter Due to Board of Parole Hearings August 12, 2018**

Dear Board Members:

This letter is written to recommend denial of early parole for inmate Laura Means.¹ In October 2014, the inmate was sentenced to 15 years 8 months in prison. After an appeal following her jury trial, in July 2017, her sentence was modified to 14 years 4 months. Releasing the inmate now means she would only serve approximately 28 percent of the actual sentence imposed. This recommendation is based upon the inmate's commitment offense and its impact on her victims.

CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE COMMITMENT OFFENSE

The inmate, a former Ventura County deputy sheriff who became a licensed California real estate agent after her law enforcement career ended, stole \$570,000 from two victims in a fraudulent real estate scheme.

In late 2006, the inmate purchased a six-acre parcel of land in the city of Camarillo. She borrowed the down payment funds for the purchase but did not disclose this fact to the bank from which she obtained the loan. After the inmate acquired the property, she advertised six one-acre lots for sale without lawfully dividing the original six-acre parcel. Roy Stump saw the inmate's advertisement and responded. The inmate told Mr. Stump his parcel would cost \$285,000, and falsely represented to Mr. Stump his purchase funds

¹ This letter is very similar to the opposition letter sent last year.

would solely be used to complete remaining infrastructure improvements to secure county approval for a final lot split. The inmate falsely represented to Mr. Stump that she needed his purchase money released from escrow before escrow closed, so she could complete the infrastructure improvements. Based on the inmate's false representations, Mr. Stump and his wife signed an escrow instruction authorizing the release of his purchase funds before escrow closed. The inmate used 98 percent of the purchase money on personal expenses unrelated to infrastructure improvements. The inmate never conveyed title to Mr. Stump.

William Clayton also responded to the inmate's advertisement. The inmate made the same false representations to Mr. Clayton that she had made to Mr. Stump, and Mr. Clayton released his \$285,000 purchase funds to the inmate before escrow closed. The inmate embezzled just under half of Mr. Clayton's purchase funds for payment of her own personal bills. The inmate never conveyed title to Mr. Clayton. After stealing \$570,000 from Mr. Stump and Mr. Clayton, she discharged them in bankruptcy.

The inmate never reported the monies she had received on her 2007 and 2008 tax returns. The inmate was convicted on 30 felonies, including grand theft, money laundering, and tax fraud/evasion, and was sentenced to a term of 15 years 8 months in prison.

DISCUSSION

The inmate has shown no insight into her crimes or the harm she caused to the victims. She never expressed remorse and had paid no restitution when she was sentenced, despite having received a real estate commission after her conviction.

The inmate has shown no ability to reform; to the contrary, she refused to pay any restitution to her victims and acted so poorly while in local custody before sentencing, she was denied good behavior credits before being sent to prison.

Though the crime was not violent, its impacts were severe. Mr. Stump's loss means he can no longer build a home for himself and his retired wife, and he is unable to build a place for his special-needs family member to reside with him. Mr. Clayton lost his life savings, and the stress caused by the victimization almost cost him his marriage. The inmate's lengthy sentence reflects the severity of the crime. Early release would be an injustice.

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CONCLUSION

The inmate is completely without remorse and poses an unreasonable risk to the community if granted early parole. I respectfully request the Board deny early parole for the inmate.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael D. Schwartz". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent initial "M" and a long, sweeping tail.

MICHAEL D. SCHWARTZ
Chief Assistant District Attorney

MDS:kd

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