



OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY  
COUNTY OF TULARE

Tim Ward, *District Attorney*

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**PRESS RELEASE**

3/13/19

**DISTRICT ATTORNEY TIM WARD STATEMENT ON GOVERNOR'S  
DEATH PENALTY MORATORIUM**

Today Governor Gavin Newsom signed an executive order declaring that no death row inmate's sentence will be carried out as long as he is in office. He spoke about the death penalty being "inconsistent with our bedrock values and strikes at the very heart of what it means to be a Californian."

As a Californian, the District Attorney of Tulare County, and a prosecutor who has spent countless hours with families torn apart by violent criminals, I find this order deeply offensive to the memories of murdered loved ones and the justice they rightfully deserve.

The death penalty is a sentence requested in only the most egregious murders. Voters believe this, and have consistently shown their support at the polls. What message does this order send to families who lost a cherished family member, friend or neighbor to our state's worst killers? What of their grief, their days, months, and years in the courtroom waiting for justice, only to now have that ultimate justice ripped from them just as a killer ripped their lives apart?

We were not notified of this decision prior to reading it in the news. If we had been, we would have worked tirelessly to reach every victim's family member to tell them of this news before they could learn about it in a similar fashion. It is abundantly clear that victims and the will of California voters are not a priority for Governor Newsom.

-Tim Ward, District Attorney

Fourteen men from Tulare County currently sit on death row:

**Christopher Tobin and Richard Letner**

*Convicted and sentenced to death in 1990 for the 1988 home invasion robbery, attempted rape, beating and eventual stabbing murder of a 59-year-old victim.*

**Jose Luperso Casares**

*Convicted and sentenced to death in 1992 for the murder of a 28-year-old victim who was shot in the head during a drug rip-off in 1989.*

**John Michael Beames**

*Convicted and sentenced to death in 1995 for the 1994 torture and murder of his girlfriend's 15-month-old daughter.*

**Steven Allen Brown**

*Convicted and sentenced to death in 1996 for the 1988 home invasion rape, sodomy, and drowning murder of an 11-year-old girl after breaking in to her home.*

**George Lopez Contreras**

*Convicted and sentenced to death in 1996 for the 1994 murder of a 49-year-old Farmersville store owner who Contreras shot in the back during a robbery.*

**Juan Ramon Sanchez**

*Convicted and sentenced to death in 2000 for the 1997 rape and murder of a 15-year-old girl as well as the murder of her mother.*

**Todd Givens**

*Convicted and sentenced to death in 2004 for the murders of two victims, a 30-year-old and 32-year-old. Givens shot and stabbed, and eventually burned the victims after luring them to his residence in 2001.*

**Timothy Young and Donald Young**

*Convicted and sentenced to death in 2006 for the 1996 murders of five victims at a Tulare bar, Pato's Place. All of the victims were killed by point blank shotgun blasts to the head after they had been robbed of approximately \$300.*

**Rufugio (Ruben) Cardenas**

*Convicted and sentenced to death in 2007 for the 2003 gang shotgun murder of a 19-year-old man.*

**Samuel Rivera**

*Convicted and sentenced to death in 2008 for the 2004 gang murder of a 23-year-old man.*

**Christopher Cheary**

*Convicted in 2017 and sentenced to death in 2018 for the 2011 sexual assault, beating, and torture murder of his girlfriend's three-year-old daughter.*

**Eric Jimenez**

*Convicted in 2018 and sentenced to death in 2019 for committing two separate homicides that occurred in 2012 and 2013 in which one victim was strangled and his body burned. Jimenez ordered the second victim's murder while in custody.*

*Media inquiries can be directed to the Office of the District Attorney, County of Tulare  
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