

Executive Department

State of California

COMMUTATION OF SENTENCE

Christopher Herrera

On May 25, 2010, Christopher Herrera and a fellow gang member drove past Juan Hernandez. Mr. Herrera pulled out a gun, yelled about a gang, and shot at Mr. Hernandez, hitting him in the leg. Mr. Hernandez survived. On October 07, 2011, the Los Angeles County Superior Court sentenced Mr. Herrera to 7 years to life for attempted murder and 25 years to life for a firearm enhancement – a total term of 32 years to life.

Mr. Herrera was just 15 years old when he was jumped into a gang and only 18 when he committed this crime. In his application for clemency, he described his conviction as a wakeup call that moved him to reevaluate his participation in the gang lifestyle. He wrote, "I wanted to become a better, productive individual and change my lifestyle. I transformed my life for the better . . . I realize the pain and destruction my old ways caused my family and my victim, and I am truly sorry for that and I would never go back that same path."

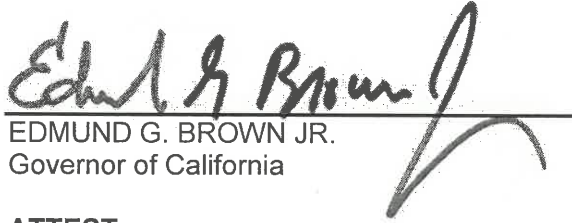
During almost eight years in prison, Mr. Herrera stopped associating with gangs and has committed himself to turning his life around. He is now 26 years old, has earned his GED, and is pursuing an A.A. degree. In 2017, Senator Andy Vidak, Assemblymember Vince Fong, and Congressman David Valadao each recognized Mr. Herrera for his completion of Bakersfield College courses in the Inmate Scholars program. Mr. Herrera routinely receives exceptional work ratings as a literacy tutor. One 2017 work report noted his "calm and understanding nature" and commended him for his passion for "not only enriching his own knowledge, but for showing, teaching and encouraging others to grow academically as well." The report concluded, "He has continued to be a positive role model for all students and encourages and challenges students to better themselves through knowledge and education." Mr. Herrera has also participated in self-help programs, including Alcoholics Anonymous and Getting Out by Going In, and currently volunteers with a youth diversion program. When he is released, he plans to stay away from his old neighborhood; he reported that he will live with his mother and hopes to start his own business using skills he has developed in prison.

When he committed this crime, Mr. Herrera was clearly a reckless teenager who was caught up in the negative influences of gangs and violence. In prison, he has shown himself to be a mature young man who has accepted responsibility for his actions and worked to better himself and those around him. I believe he deserves an earlier opportunity to make his case to the Board of Parole Hearings so it can determine whether he is suitable for parole.

THEREFORE, I, EDMUND G. BROWN JR., Governor of the State of California, by virtue of the power and authority vested in me by the Constitution and statutes of the State of California, do hereby commute the sentence of Christopher Herrera to a total of 10 years to life.



IN WITNESS WHEREOF I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Great Seal of the State of California to be affixed this 17th day of August, 2018.


EDMUND G. BROWN JR.
Governor of California

ATTEST:


ALEX PADILLA
Secretary of State