



Michelle Cruz, Esq.
State Victim Advocate

STATE OF CONNECTICUT
OFFICE OF GOVERNMENTAL ACCOUNTABILITY
OFFICE OF THE VICTIM ADVOCATE
505 HUDSON STREET, HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06106

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: August 28, 2012

CONTACT: State Victim Advocate, Michelle Cruz, Esq. – (860) 550-6632

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

(Hartford) STATE VICTIM ADVOCATE MICHELLE CRUZ AGAIN APPEALS FOR THE IMMEDIATE SUSPENSION OF THE RISK REDUCTION EARNED CREDIT PROGRAM

State Victim Advocate Michelle Cruz is appealing once again to the Governor's Office and the Commissioner of the Department of Correction to immediately suspend the risk reduction earned credit program. "The Office of the Victim Advocate has learned that the defendant arrested for the tragic murder of Luthfur Tarafdar in East Hartford, CT had a lengthy criminal history of violence, unsuccessful probation terms and has been identified by the Department of Correction as an inmate that was released early as a result of the risk reduction earned credit program," stated Cruz. "This is another case that highlights the need to immediately suspend the risk reduction earned credit program (RREC) until the program can be adequately evaluated to address issues, including the awarding of RREC and compliance with inmates' offender accountability plans, as well as to ensure that appropriate supervision measures are in place to monitor the masses being released into our communities."

"At this point, this is about more than the RREC; this is about the manner in which the criminal justice system is responding to repeat violent offenders and those who habitually violate probation," said Cruz. "Kezlynn Mendez, also known as Willie Batts, had a lengthy criminal history and was charged with violating probation twice, yet still, he was not held accountable for his criminal behavior," added Cruz.

Kezlynn Mendez was convicted of Robbery 2nd and Assault 3rd on January 18, 2006. He was sentenced to 10 years, suspended after 4 years and 5 years probation. In July of 2010, in addition to new criminal cases, he was arrested and charged with violation of probation. He later admitted to violating probation and was sentenced to 6 years, suspended after 1 year; 2 years probation. He again was arrested for new criminal charges and again charged with violating probation on December 6, 2011. Less than 3 months before his release from the Department of Correction, he admitted to violating that probation and was sentenced to 5 years, suspended after 4 months; 18 months probation. In addition to that 4 month sentence, he received a 30 day sentence for Reckless Driving and a 3 month sentence for Threatening. It is unclear why this defendant's sentences are reduced as his behavior escalates.

"This defendant has demonstrated his inability to comply with probation as well as his propensity to commit crime. He should have been identified as a high risk offender. How many more innocent people will be victimized before this program's faults will be addressed?" pleaded Cruz.

END