



COUNTY OF YOLO  
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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
Date: March 16, 2026

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## **Child Rapist from Yolo County Recommended for Early Release under California's Elder Parole Law; Yolo DA Opposes Release & Requests Governor Newsom Order a Review & Reversal**

**Israel Ceja was convicted of 20 counts of Forcible Rape and other charges in 2000. On January 29, 2026, he was recommended for parole by a two-commissioner panel**

**(Woodland, CA) – March 16, 2026** – On Friday March 13, 2026, the Yolo County District Attorney submitted a letter to California Governor Gavin Newsom urging to him to take action and have the decision recommending parole for this convicted child rapist reviewed and reversed. Israel Ceja was recommended for elder parole in late January by a two-commissioner panel of the Board of Parole Hearings. The hearing took place virtually.

In 1993, Ceja married the victim's mother and began participating in bathing the then 11-year-old. He began molesting her and she was in fear that she would be removed from her mother's care if she reported sexual abuse, again. The defendant knew a former boyfriend of her mother had sexually abused the victim, leading her to be removed from the home. The defendant's abuse progressed and continued until the victim fainted in public in 1999 and was taken to the hospital where it was discovered she was pregnant. The DNA of the fetus confirmed the defendant was the genetic father. Investigation determined that he had tried to make her jump from the house and a truck ramp to try to induce miscarriage. Additionally in July of 1999 after coming home intoxicated from a party he had pointed a gun at the victim, accused her of looking at other men, then pulled the trigger. Fortunately, it did not fire, and the victim was able to escape.

On September 29, 2000, a Yolo County jury convicted Ceja of multiple counts of forcible rape, assault with a firearm, child endangerment and lewd acts. On November 1, 2000, Yolo County Superior Court Judge Timothy Fall sentenced Ceja to 139 years in state prison.

The Elderly Parole law in California allows inmates who are 50 years or older and have served at least 20 years in prison, or those who are 60 and have served 25 years, to apply for early release and parole. While certain offenders, such as those sentenced to death or life without parole are excluded from this program, child rapists and other sex offenders are eligible for

consideration. Ceja was 63 years old and had served 26 ½ years in custody at the time of this hearing.

California Board of Parole Commissioner Neil Schneider and Deputy Commissioner Letizia Pinitore opined that Mr. Ceja no longer posed an unreasonable risk to society if released. Commissioner Schneider explained that Ceja's age, his extensive programing, numerous laudatory notes, lack of misconduct while incarcerated, his lower Static 99 and Criminal Risk Assessment and his "genuine" plans for parole were very "authentic and real" and therefore justified the joint decision to recommend him for parole. Commissioner Schneider referred to Ceja as an "excellent citizen."

Ceja admitted in the same hearing that he suffered from the "disorder" of being attracted to young girls. He also indicated that his primary way of controlling his pedophilic urges is "praying."

The victim was not present for the hearing. The Yolo County District Attorney's Office attended the hearing and opposed Mr. Ceja's release.

The case now goes to Governor Newsom to review the Parole Board's decision and decide to accept or reject the recommendation. The Board of Parole Commissioners are all appointed by the Governor and serve at his pleasure.

California State Assemblymember Stephanie Nguyen has introduced AB2727, cosponsored by the Sacramento and Orange County District Attorney's office proposing excluding individuals convicted of the most serious sexual offenses from eligibility under Elder Parole. For other aggravated sex offenses, the bill proposes increasing the age to 75 and serving a minimum of 30 years before being eligible.

District Attorney Reisig said: "This decision to recommend elder parole and early release for this monstrous child rapist, whose primary plan is to "pray" away his admitted desires for little girls, defies all common sense and reasonable interpretations of justice and public safety. There is nothing "excellent" about a sexual predator who raped and destroyed the childhood of a little girl for nearly a decade. Governor Newsom must use every ounce of his Constitutional executive authority to stop and reverse this release and all of the other outrageous elder parole releases being ordered by his appointed parole commissioners. California should not a safe harbor for child rapists."

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