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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Approved by: CJZ  
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**Parole Denied for DUI Repeat Offender and Murderer**  
*CDCR #G12779; Kern County Court Case #BF118481A*

Kern County District Attorney Cynthia Zimmer announced that the California Board of Parole Hearings (BPH) denied parole to Inmate Esteban Hernandez. On August 28, 2024, BPH found that Hernandez continued to pose a current and unreasonable risk to public safety. Representing the District Attorney's Office was Deputy District Attorney Gina Nargie.

At approximately 8:45pm on March 17, 2007, Hernandez killed Reynalda Bazaldua on Comanche Road when he crashed into her vehicle head-on after illegally entering her lane of travel with a blood alcohol level of .24%. Bazaldua was driving her two minor daughters at the time of the collision. The children both sustained multiple injuries to their face, legs, and other parts of their bodies, but survived. Hernandez's was on probation for a driving under the influence conviction at the time of crash.

On February 26, 2008, a Kern County jury found Hernandez guilty of murder in the second degree, gross vehicular manslaughter while intoxicated with a prior conviction for driving under the influence of alcohol, driving under the influence of alcohol causing great bodily injury, and driving on a suspended license. The jury also found true that Hernandez had three qualifying prior convictions for driving under the influence. On April 9, 2008, a Kern County Judge sentenced Hernandez to serve four years, plus 15 years to life, plus an additional 7 years. As a result of changes to the law, in 2023, Hernandez's sentence was modified to 25 years to life, plus an additional 6 years.

On August 28, 2024, the BPH conducted Hernandez's second parole hearing, just 18 months after his last hearing where he was denied for 3 years. At the hearing, the commissioners focused on Hernandez's insight into his alcohol abuse history, criminal history, and current susceptibility to negative peer groups involving circumventing crime victim restitution. The Kern County District Attorney's Office asked the BPH to deny parole. The BPH found that Hernandez was not suitable for parole and posed a current unreasonable risk of danger to society. The BPH has the option of denying an inmate parole for a period of 15, 10, 7, 5 or 3 years. Hernandez's commissioners issued a three-year denial. As such, Hernandez's next hearing could be in 18 months.

District Attorney Cynthia Zimmer commented; “Two young girls tragically lost their mother that day, and Hernandez was responsible. His three prior DUI convictions were far too many, and it’s a shame that it took the loss of an innocent life for him to finally face significant prison time. We will continue to fight for him to remain behind bars—in honor of the victim and in support of her daughters.”

Esteban Hernandez:

