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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

David W. Prater's Press Statement:

Today I filed charges on the five current members of the Oklahoma Pardon and Parole Board. The criminal information alleges TEN separate counts of violating Oklahoma's Open Meeting Act.

Every effort was made by me to resolve this matter in a fair and equitable manner before the filing of the criminal informations. I attempted to dispose of the matter in a structured manner, designed to hold the members of the Pardon and Parole Board accountable, yet calculated to have the least negative effect on the State of Oklahoma and the Pardon and Parole System. The Board members were offered an opportunity to step down two at a time to allow the Board to operate with a quorum and continue Board business without interruption until all members had been replaced in approximately one year. The Board rejected the offer. The Board members are presumed innocent and have an absolute right to a trial on the merits of the cases against them. I support and defend their right to proceed in that manner.

Though the scope of our investigation included Board Meetings beginning January 2010, the ten criminal counts charged, address only Board actions beginning May 2011, the month after Assistant Attorney General Gay Tudor delivered training to the Board on the Oklahoma Open Meeting Act. Out of an abundance of fairness, I only charged the Board Members for alleged willful violations of the Open Meeting Act occurring AFTER actual notice of the Act's notice requirements were directly delivered to the Board in person by the Assistant Attorney General.

The charges allege that the members of the Board conducted business that was not published and noticed in the Agenda. The business conducted included the Board Members discussing and voting on inmates who were being considered for early parole consideration. The Information alleges that the Agenda published for the specific meetings contained no notice of the activity the Board undertook during the "Docket Modifications" Agenda item. Names of the inmates considered during the "Docket Modifications" item were not made public or noticed anywhere on the agenda or in any related document referenced in the Agenda.

The Criminal Information in this case alleges Board activity designed to hide potentially unpopular actions of the Board from the citizens it serves. Public Safety is a core function of our government. As alleged, the Board was making crucial public safety decisions without giving the citizens of Oklahoma an opportunity to scrutinize its activity. In so doing, the Board potentially has re-victimized numerous victims and surviving family members by not giving them notice that the Board was taking action that qualified the person who victimized them for early release.

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