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PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Date: February 16, 2018
Re: Miguel Quezada
Murder convict granted parole

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Modesto, California – Stanislaus County District Attorney Birgit Fladager announced today that Miguel Quezada, age 36, of Modesto, was found suitable for parole at a February 6, 2018 hearing of the State Board of Parole Hearings at Avenal State Prison in Avenal, CA.

Quezada was a high school drop-out and a member of the Smyrna Park Nortenos (SPN) criminal street gang. On May 8, 1998, Quezada and members of the gang went to a residence in Modesto to confront rival members of the Vario South Side Modesto (VSSM) gang. At the outset of the confrontation, Quezada received a handgun from another gang member that he used to shoot and killed Daniel Reyes. Quezada was 16 years old at the time of the offense.

A Stanislaus County jury convicted Quezada of one count of second degree murder, three counts of assault with a firearm, use of a firearm, and participation in a criminal street gang. He was sentenced to 45 years to life in prison.

In 2015, Penal Code section 3051, as amended by SB261 legislation, became law, requiring the Board of Parole Hearings to review parole suitability of any prisoner who was under 23 years of age at the time of the offense. In reviewing a “youthful offender’s” parole suitability, the Board of Parole Hearings is required to “give great weight to the diminished culpability of juveniles as compared to adults, the hallmark features of youth, and any subsequent growth and increased maturity of the prisoner.” (Penal Code section 4801(c).)

While in prison, Quezada completed his high school diploma and received an AA degree. Even though he also suffered several disciplinary issues, including assaulting another inmate in 2003 and possession of a cell phone in 2010, the Board of Parole Hearings noted that such misconduct was remote in time and believed that Quezada showed sincere remorse for his actions, including the murder of Daniel Reyes. The Board then granted Quezada parole. He had served only 19 years of his 45-year sentence.

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