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PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Date: February 14, 2020
Re: Sopheap Chhoeung
Parole granted for violent felon

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Modesto, California - Stanislaus County District Attorney Birgit Fladager announced today that Sopheap Chhoeung, age 42, of Modesto was found suitable for parole during a February 11, 2020 hearing of the State Board of Parole Hearings at the Folsom State Prison. Deputy District Attorney Monroe Tyler appeared at the hearing on behalf of the People.

On March 27, 1998, Chhoeung and Sokhean Keo along with other members of the "Crazy Mob Family" criminal street gang armed themselves and drove to a residence in Modesto in order to rob the residents. After they kicked open the front door and entered the home, Keo went into the kitchen carrying a shotgun. One of the victims in the home fired, hitting Keo in the chest. A female in the home ran to a bedroom and locked herself and her children inside. Other "Crazy Mob Family" gang members returned fire from outside the house. Fortunately, no one else was hit or injured.

Officers arrested Chhoeung when he brought Keo to a local hospital for treatment. Outside the victims' residence, officers found evidence showing that possibly two shotguns and one 9 mm handgun had been fired at the home. Inside the suspect's vehicle, officers found duct tape, five pairs of gloves and dark clothing items. At the time this occurred, Chhoeung was on felony probation for residential burglary.

On June 14, 1999, Chhoeung was convicted by a Stanislaus County jury of burglary, assault with a firearm, shooting at an occupied dwelling and being a convicted felon in possession of a firearm. The jury also found that the crimes had been committed in furtherance of Chhoeung's participation in a criminal street gang. His burglary probation was revoked and he was sentenced to a total term of 34 years in state prison for both cases.

Since being sent to prison, Chhoeung has committed various rule violations including possession of contraband and participation in a riot. During the parole hearing on February 11th, Chhoeung minimized his involvement in the gang, telling the board that he was only the getaway driver and

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not an official member of gang. Deputy District Attorney Tyler argued for continued confinement based on Chhoeung's lack of insight into the crime and the continuing safety risk he poses to the community if he were to be released. Unfortunately, the Board disagreed and granted Chhoeung parole.

This was Chhoeung's first parole hearing. Recent changes in the law regarding parole hearings allow "youthful offenders" -those who committed their crimes under age 26- to be eligible for early release on parole. Chhoeung was 20 years old at the time he participated in the home invasion robbery.

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