

Justin L. Griffith and Michael W. Worrell

Pulaski County, VA

As two of the top law enforcement officials in Pulaski County, we have always believed in a united pursuit of justice. We are proud of the mutual respect and open lines of communication between our respective offices. These attributes flow outward to the community and allow for law and order in Pulaski to be performed in a safe and effective manner.

In 2020, the Virginia Democrat legislators made organized and concerted efforts to bring “transformational change” to the Commonwealth’s criminal justice system during a special session. Those changes included reforming criminal sentencing to prevent juries from sentencing; limiting the power of the courts to sentence defendants on probation violations; and passing legislation allowing for inmates to be released before serving their full sentences.

We will never stand with the notion that we trust a jury of one’s peers to determine guilt or innocence but do not trust them to sentence. The 2021 probation violation laws have already had detrimental effects on this county, as evidenced by the November 3, 2021, statement released to the public regarding a convicted sex offender that was barred by those new laws from receiving any incarceration on his probation violation.

Regarding the early release of prison inmates, this county has already felt, first hand, the predictable tremors of terror of that mindset when a Democrat controlled Parole Board released David Simpkins, a convicted felon, who promptly robbed a convenience store. As if the reign of chaos created by the former Virginia Parole Board wasn’t enough, the Virginia Department of Corrections expects an “immediate surge” of inmates to be released beginning on July 1, 2022, under legislation that passed during a Democrat controlled special session. “Virginia Department of Corrections estimates 62% of those being released early have a violent crime somewhere on their record and 54% have a high to medium risk of violent recidivism.”

Furthermore, these concerns for justice are not isolated to Pulaski County, alone. In 2020, Vincent Ray Martin, who was convicted of killing Richmond police officer Michael Connors in 1979, was paroled without following the board’s procedures. In 2021, our neighboring county, Wythe, became another victim of the former Democrat controlled Parole Board. Christopher Shawn Wheeler, convicted of the 1994 fatal shooting of Cliff Dicker, a Deputy for the Wythe County Sheriff’s office, was sentenced to 43 years in prison. After serving 26 years of that sentence, the Democrat controlled Parole Board granted him an early release. In addition, after his unjust release, according to numerous news outlets he was re-arrested in June of 2022, while brandishing a firearm and bragging about killing a police officer. Thankfully, as promised, Governor Youngkin has replaced the entire Virginia Parole Board.

In the continuing trend of Southwest Virginia’s suffering the aftershocks of the former board, Hank Partin, a local stalwart in public service was blocked from joining the newly revamped Parole Board. Regarding the before mention blocking, to quote Democrat Senator Adam Ebbin from Alexandria “I think that the House needs to be taught a lesson”. We can assure the Northern Virginia legislators, that here in Southwest Virginia, we need no more lessons on how their actions can impact the New River Valley. David Simpkins and Christopher Shawn Wheeler have taught us enough.

In addition, Democrat legislators pursued avenues to eliminate qualified immunity provisions for law enforcement officers acting in their official capacity. Democrat led calls to

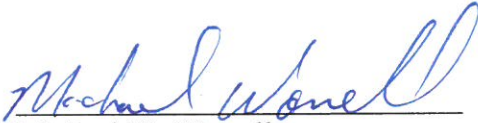
action regarding reductions and/or removals of School Resource Officers have taken place in the last couple of years, prompting our County officials to draft joint letters of support for our School Resource Officers. Moreover, Democrat sponsored legislation to eliminate mandatory minimum sentences which protect the most vulnerable and punish the most wicked have routinely been under attack.

Recently, a dozen Democrat Commonwealth's Attorneys throughout the state formed an alliance called the Virginia Progressive Prosecutors for Justice. In Pulaski County, we are not willing to allow a shadow of doubt be cast on justice by a progressive Democrat movement. We are united in announcing our formal renunciation of the Democrat Party. This has been a long and well considered decision. We are in accord with the principles of the Republican Party and are expressing our intent to support all of its nominees for public office in the ensuing election.

We are blessed to serve,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Justin L. Griffith", written over a horizontal line.

Justin L. Griffith
Pulaski County Commonwealth's Attorney

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Michael W. Worrell", written over a horizontal line.

Michael W. Worrell
Pulaski County Sheriff