

TRUMBULL COUNTY PROSECUTOR'S OFFICE

Dennis Watkins, Prosecutor

Repeat Violent Offenders newsletter

PAROLE UPDATE: Aug. 26, 2026

Woman denied parole for 10 years; Joy Hodge convicted in 2011 murder of 15-month-old

Jenna Maze, coordinator for the Trumbull County Prosecutor's Victim/Witness Division, announced that the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Corrections has informed her that convicted murderer Joy Hodge has been denied parole and must remain in prison for at least 10 more years.



According to the ODRC, Hodge will face her next parole hearing in May 2036. Hodge, 43, is currently incarcerated in Dayton Correctional Institution.

Assistant Prosecutor Jennifer Paris, a member of this office's Child Assault Unit who wrote the parole board in June opposing Hodge's potential parole, said she was pleased with the parole board's decision. Prosecutor Dennis Watkins also applauded the decision, saying a dangerous murderer with repeated behavioral violations will remain behind bars, keeping Ohioans safe. Former Child Assault

Division Chief Diane Barber tried the case to a jury before Judge W. Wyatt McKay in 2012.

Hodge was sentenced to 15 years to life in prison on March 12, 2013, for convictions of murder, felonious assault and endangering children.

On Sept. 5, 2011, and continuing into the early morning hours of the next day, Hodge engaged in Labor Day celebrations including the consumption of alcohol and smoking marijuana. She had left her young children at home unattended, repeatedly prioritizing partying and personal gratification over the basic duty of parenthood. After briefly returning home, Hodge went to a bar around midnight to continue drinking, where she remained until about 2:30 a.m. As a direct result of this reckless abandonment, the defendant's 15-month-old female child was discovered deceased in her crib about 1 p.m. on Sept. 6, 2011. At Hodge's jury trial, the coroner testified the young child had been deceased for a minimum of seven hours prior to her discovery. Additionally, the autopsy documented multiple areas of bruising to the head, thighs, chest as well as a lacerated liver, hemorrhaging within the abdominal cavity and swelling of the brain. Evidence showed the

victim endured significant physical trauma for a long period of time before ultimately succumbing to fatal injuries.

Paris noted in her letter to the parole board that Hodge's institutional record while in prison reflects a persistent and escalating pattern of misconduct. Nineteen separate violations and infractions have been a part of Hodge's record from March 2013 through November 2025. The more serious misconduct violations included theft, verbal harassment of correctional staff and repeated refusals to follow orders.

Paris notes that these violations "underscore serious concerns regarding her respect for authority, impulse control and capacity to function within the bounds of the law." Paris stated she was glad that the parole board allowed Hodge to continue to serve out the balance of her sentence.

"Given the seriousness of the offenses... early release would not appropriately reflect the gravity of the crimes Hodge committed, or the harm inflicted to the victim," Jennifer Paris stated in the letter written June 16, 2026.

Members of the public may submit comments about the potential parole of Joy Hodge. Comments can be made through the ODRC website: <https://drc.ohio.gov/systems-and-services/1-parole/parole-board-hearing-input> For more information, contact Guy Vogrin, investigator / public information officer, Trumbull County Prosecutor's Office, 330-675-2485.