

TRUMBULL COUNTY PROSECUTOR'S OFFICE

Dennis Watkins, Prosecutor

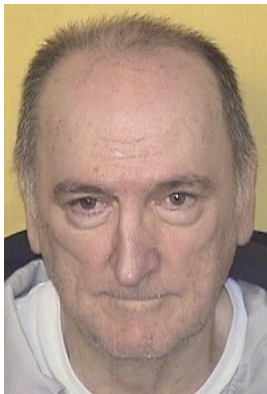
Repeat violent offender newsletter

PAROLE HEARING UPDATE: Feb. 13, 2026

Czoka, 78, rapist of children, is denied parole

Parole board reverses prior decision to release

**PROSECUTOR'S STAFF, VICTIMS TRAVEL SUBMIT TESTIMONY TO HELP
DENY RELEASE OF 'DECEITFUL, DEMENTED' SEXUAL PREDATOR**



On Feb. 11, 2026, convicted sex offender Paul Czoka was refused parole by a 5-3-1 vote of the full state parole board, with one board member abstaining. Traveling to Columbus to oppose this bid for freedom were Trumbull County Prosecutor Dennis Watkins, some of his staff members and two of Czoka's young victims who still fear the man.

In August, the parole board had granted Czoka's release and Watkins and three victims appealed that decision which brought about the full board hearing.

After hearing testimony from both sides, including Watkins and one of his victims, the parole board determined that Czoka's next parole hearing would be in 2031. Watkins said he was very pleased with the board's decision and the courage shown by the victims who traveled to Columbus to testify.

Czoka, photo at left, was sentenced in 1992 to a term of 14 to 55 years in prison on two counts of rape and two counts of pandering obscenity involving minors. Czoka's victims were as young as 5 years old at the time, relatives/friends of an ex-girlfriend. The obscenity charges involved Czoka taking pictures and videos of himself and the young victims during these heinous acts.

In her testimony before the board, victim Charlotte talked about the pictures and videos Czoka had taken while having sex with her at the age of 8. These images were produced by Czoka using a tripod in the bedroom where one of his many rapes of kids took place. Charlotte, who was sexually abused by Czoka for about four years,

said along with her own relatives that there were probably many more victims out there.

“We were all innocent, happy children before this sexual deviant came into our lives,” she said.

Charlotte also stated that Czoka still affects her life today, saying she feels uncomfortable around someone who has the same tone of voice or mannerisms as the child rapists.

“I remember being in the bedroom ... and how I would hold my breath when I heard him creep down those steps. I had hoped he would pass by, but he never would.” The victim also stated she is also triggered by “the smell of tropical mist spray” that were present during those days of abuse.

Charlotte would tell the board she was raped at her mother’s house, at parks, at a relative’s home, and many times in the car. She said that Paul Czoka threatened her and he said: ‘I will kill your sister, mom and dad if you told anybody’ about what he was doing.

Charlotte stated that she still fears Czoka and is concerned about him seeking revenge.

If released, Charlotte stated: “I know it is a fact that there will be more victims...They may not be as lucky as me, because he would kill them rather than go back to prison.”

Watkins, prior to the hearing, had asked for a continuance because of a possible denial of another victim’s constitutional rights. A second victim named Tina, had traveled to Columbus to testify against Czoka, but was told she would not testify because her name was not part of the “convicted charges” against the rapist. Watkins stated that she may have a constitutional right to be heard, and that she was a proper, unnamed victim in the pandering of obscenity charges which Czoka had pled guilty to. Watkins said he needed more time to review the law and make legal arguments, noting that for three months he was told this victim could testify. But the board denied the motion.

However, Tina’s written statement was reviewed by the full parole board before the hearing. In that statement, Tina maintained that at age 5, she vividly remembers Czoka telling her, ‘Take your clothes off’ and ‘Don’t say anything or I will hurt you.’ She even remembers her aunt’s spare bedroom having “floral bed sheets” and the tripod with camera in the bedroom where Czoka took pictures and the smell of

“vanilla” which she associates with Czoka’s sexual attacks as they played “Hide and Go Seek”, a smell, which to this very day, Tina dislikes. Tina “fears this man’s release.” It is a matter of personal safety for her.

In his presentation Watkins states Czoka deserves the maximum sentence allowable by law because of these heinous acts. Watkins stated “only the core evil sex offenders want to photograph and film the rapes of young children victims where they are the lead performer.”

“Most child sex offenders from Trumbull County and elsewhere in Ohio do not make movies of what they are doing. That’s why extreme pedophiles like Czoka are so dangerous,” Watkins said. “Those who make movies of their sexual acts with children are still in prison.”

Czoka’s public defender stated that her client had a relatively clean prison record, had not an extensive criminal history and was supported by many prison staff members. Watkins responded that Czoka “misled others and tried to say he made one mistake rather than telling the full story of what he did.” In other words, it was a “learned remorse syndrome.” Good behavior in prison does not necessarily equate with good behavior outside prison confinements. Watkins concluded the only way to guarantee that there will be no more child victims is to let Czoka die in prison.

Watkins also countered that evidence showed that as far back as that Czoka’s sexual assaults dated back to 1971 in places like Girard, Niles and Weathersfield.

The public defender also said that Czoka is suffering from cancer and has a colostomy bag. The plans if he were to be released, Czoka would have resided in a nursing home in the Alliance area of Stark County.

However, the board decided to have Czoka remain in Pickaway Correctional Institution until his next parole hearing scheduled for 2031.

Members of the public may submit comments about the potential parole of Paul Czoka. 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 M. Vogrin, public information officer/investigator for the Trumbull County Prosecutor’s Office at 330-675-2485.