

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25  
26

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

SHANNON RAY HALL,

Petitioner,

No. CIV S-08-824 FCD CHS P

vs.

CLAUDE FINN,

Respondent.

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

\_\_\_\_\_ /

I. INTRODUCTION

Petitioner Hall is a state prisoner proceeding pro se with a petition for writ of habeas corpus brought pursuant to 28 U.S.C. §2254. Petitioner is currently serving an indeterminate sentence of 16 years to life following his 1989 conviction in Los Angeles County for second degree murder with use of a deadly weapon. This petition challenges the execution of petitioner’s sentence, and specifically, the November 16, 2006 decision of the state parole authority that he was not suitable to be released on parole.

II. BACKGROUND

According to a summary of facts read into the record at petitioner’s parole suitability hearing, his offense arose out of a verbal altercation with his friend. On March 9, 1988, from approximately 8:15 to 9:30 p.m., petitioner, age 17, and the victim, Dennis Jobe,

1 were in the parking lot of a Target retail store. A witness saw the two young men fighting for  
2 about 20 minutes, lost sight of them, and then saw them fighting for another five to ten minutes.  
3 They were yelling and shoving each other. According to the witness, Jobe appeared to be  
4 defending himself. When the witness left, both young men were inside a gold van parked in the  
5 lot. At about 9:45 to 9:50 p.m., Target's manager patrolled the parking lot for security purposes.  
6 He noticed a gold van in the lot but no one near it. After making a circle of the entire area, he  
7 noticed the van was gone. He also discovered Jobe's body in the road near an exit from the  
8 parking lot. The autopsy revealed the cause of death to be multiple stab wounds to the chest,  
9 ribcage, and back from a four to six-inch knife. Officers interviewed petitioner at his home later  
10 that night and subsequently transported him to headquarters where he was arrested.

11           According to petitioner's version of the offense, he got off work at 6:00 p.m. and  
12 had been drinking since that time. Petitioner had been severely depressed for about two weeks  
13 about problems with his girlfriend and his biological father. Petitioner and Jobe were in the  
14 Target parking lot eating food purchased from Jack in the Box across the street. While they were  
15 eating, Jobe wiped food on the dash of the van and an argument ensued. Petitioner told Jobe to  
16 get out, but Jobe responded, "Hell no, you are going to take me home." Petitioner went across  
17 the street for more beer. Jobe walked over to a nearby phone booth. Petitioner went back to his  
18 van and turned the key. According to petitioner Jobe came flying through the window opening,  
19 pulled petitioner out, removed his shirt, and challenged petitioner to fight. It was then that  
20 petitioner grabbed his knife, which was under the driver's seat. After that, the events are a blur  
21 to petitioner. He felt as if he were not in control of his body. Petitioner does not remember how  
22 many times he stabbed Jobe. (*See* Transcript of Subsequent Parole Consideration Hearing, State  
23 of California, Board of Parole Hearings, November 16, 2006 ("Transcript"), at 12-13.)

24           Petitioner was convicted of second degree murder with use of a deadly weapon  
25 and sentenced to a term of 16 years to life. He was received in state prison on December 13,  
26 1989. On November 16, 2006, a panel of the Board of Parole hearings ("Board") conducted a

1 hearing to determine whether petitioner was suitable for parole. After considering various  
2 positive and negative suitability factors, the panel concluded that petitioner would pose an  
3 unreasonable risk of danger to society if released, and thus that he was not suitable for parole.

4           Petitioner sought habeas corpus relief in the California state courts. On October  
5 29, 2007, the Los Angeles County Superior Court issued a decision concluding that the Board’s  
6 decision was supported by some evidence in the record. The California Court of Appeal and the  
7 California Supreme Court likewise denied petitioner’s claims for relief on state habeas corpus.

### 8           III. CLAIMS PRESENTED

9           The petition sets forth three grounds for relief. In ground one, petitioner claims  
10 that the Board’s decision to deny parole was unsupported by “real” evidence in the record that he  
11 posed an unreasonable risk of danger or threat to public safety. Petitioner contends specifically  
12 that the Board made findings that were not supported by the record and improperly relied on  
13 unchanging factors such as the commitment offense and his conduct prior to his incarceration. In  
14 ground two, petitioner claims that the Board cited various relevant and reliable information such  
15 as mental health reports, counselor reports, conduct in prison, and rehabilitation, but failed to  
16 *actually consider* this positive evidence in relation to his parole suitability. Finally, in ground  
17 three, petitioner contends that the “some evidence” standard of review infringes upon his liberty  
18 interest and that a preponderance of the evidence standard, or a “substantive evidence” standard,  
19 should apply instead.

20           For purposes of this opinion, each of petitioner’s three grounds for relief will be  
21 addressed in a single discussion on federal due process of law in the state parole context.

### 22           IV. APPLICABLE LAW FOR FEDERAL HABEAS CORPUS

23           An application for writ of habeas corpus by a person in custody under judgment of  
24 a state court can be granted only for violations of the Constitution or laws of the United States.  
25 28 U.S.C. §2254(a); *see also Peltier v. Wright*, 15 F.3d 860, 861 (9th Cir. 1993); *Middleton v.*  
26 *Cupp*, 768 F.2d 1083, 1085 (9th Cir. 1985) (*citing Engle v. Isaac*, 456 U.S. 107, 119 (1982)).

1 This petition for writ of habeas corpus was filed after the effective date of, and thus is subject to,  
2 the Antiterrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act of 1996 (“AEDPA”). *Lindh v. Murphy*, 521  
3 U.S. 320, 326 (1997); *see also Weaver v. Thompson*, 197 F.3d 359 (9th Cir. 1999). Under  
4 AEDPA, federal habeas corpus relief also is not available for any claim decided on the merits in  
5 state court proceedings unless the state court’s adjudication of the claim:

6 (1) resulted in a decision that was contrary to, or involved an  
7 unreasonable application of, clearly established Federal law, as  
determined by the Supreme Court of the United States; or

8 (2) resulted in a decision that was based on an unreasonable  
9 determination of the facts in light of the evidence presented in the  
State court proceeding.

10 28 U.S.C. § 2254(d); *see also Penry v. Johnson*, 532 U.S. 782, 792-93 (2001); *Williams v.*  
11 *Taylor*, 529 U.S. 362, 402-03 (2000); *Lockhart v. Terhune*, 250 F.3d 1223, 1229 (9th Cir. 2001).

## 12 V. FEDERAL DUE PROCESS IN THE STATE PAROLE CONTEXT

13 The Due Process Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment to the United States  
14 Constitution prohibits state action that deprives a person of life, liberty, or property without due  
15 process of law. In general, a person alleging a due process violation must first demonstrate that  
16 he or she was deprived of a protected liberty or property interest, and then show that the  
17 procedures attendant upon the deprivation were not constitutionally sufficient. *Kentucky Dep’t.*  
18 *of Corrections v. Thompson*, 490 U.S. 454, 459-60 (1989); *McQuillion v. Duncan*, 306 F.3d 895,  
19 900 (9th Cir. 2002).

20 A protected liberty interest may arise from either the Due Process Clause itself or  
21 from state laws. *Board of Pardons v. Allen*, 482 U.S. 369, 373 (1987). The United States  
22 Constitution does not, in and of itself, create for prisoners a protected liberty interest in receipt of  
23 a parole date. *Jago v. Van Curen*, 454 U.S. 14, 17-21 (1981). If a state’s statutory parole scheme  
24 uses mandatory language, however, it creates a presumption that parole will be granted, thereby  
25 giving rise to a constitutional liberty interest. *McQuillion*, 306 F.3d at 901 (citing *Greenholtz v.*  
26 *Inmates of Nebraska Penal*, 442 U.S. 1, 12 (1979)). California’s statutory scheme for

1 determining parole for life-sentenced prisoners provides, generally, that parole *shall* be granted  
2 “unless consideration of the public safety requires a more lengthy period of incarceration.” Cal.  
3 Penal Code §3041 (emphasis added). This statute gives California state prisoners whose  
4 sentences carry the possibility of parole a clearly established, constitutionally protected liberty  
5 interest in receipt of a parole release date. *Irons v. Carey*, 505 F.3d 846, 850-51 (9th Cir. 2007)  
6 (citing *Sass v. Cal. Bd. of Prison Terms*, 461 F.3d 1123, 1128 (9th Cir. 2006)); *Biggs v. Terhune*,  
7 334 F.3d 910, 914 (9th Cir. 2003); *McQuillion*, 306 F.3d at 903; *Allen*, 482 U.S. at 377-78  
8 (quoting *Greenholtz*, 442 U.S. at 12)).

9           The full panoply of rights afforded a defendant in a criminal proceeding is not  
10 constitutionally mandated in the context of a parole proceeding. See *Pedro v. Or. Parole Bd.*,  
11 825 F.2d 1396, 1398-99 (9th Cir. 1987). The Supreme Court has held that a parole board’s  
12 procedures are constitutionally adequate if the inmate is given an opportunity to be heard and a  
13 decision informing him of the reasons he did not qualify for parole. *Greenholtz*, 442 U.S. at 16.

14           Additionally, as a matter of California state law, denial of parole to state inmates  
15 must be supported by at least “some evidence” demonstrating future dangerousness. *Hayward v.*  
16 *Marshall*, 603 F.3d 546, 562-63 (9th Cir. 2010) (en banc) (citing *In re Rosenkrantz*, 29 Cal.4th  
17 616 (2002), *In re Lawrence*, 44 Cal.4th 1181 (2008), and *In re Shaputis*, 44 Cal.4th 1241  
18 (2008)). California’s “some evidence” requirement is a component of the liberty interest created  
19 by the state’s parole system.” *Cooke v. Solis*, 606 F.3d 1206, 1213 (9th Cir. 2010). The federal  
20 Due Process Clause requires that California comply with its own “some evidence” requirement.  
21 *Pearson v. Muntz*, 606 F.3d 606, 609 (9th Cir. 2010) (per curiam). Accordingly, the United  
22 States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit has held that a reviewing court such as this one  
23 must “decide whether the California judicial decision approving the... decision rejecting parole  
24 was an ‘unreasonable application’ of the California ‘some evidence’ requirement, or was ‘based  
25 on an unreasonable determination of the facts in light of the evidence.’” *Hayward*, 603 F.3d at  
26 562-63 (citing 28 U.S.C. §2254(d)).

1           Petitioner’s contrary assertion that a preponderance of the evidence standard  
2 applies instead is without merit. No federal authority cited by petitioner supports this contention,  
3 or his similar contention that the standard should be at least “substantive evidence,” defined as  
4 enough evidence to convince a reasonable person. Pursuant to existing Ninth Circuit authority,  
5 the some evidence standard of review is the proper standard to be applied. *See, e.g., Hayward,*  
6 *603 F.3d at 562-63; Pearson, 606 F.3d at 609.*

7           The analysis whether some evidence supports a parole decision in California is  
8 framed by the state’s statutes and regulations governing parole suitability determinations for its  
9 prisoners. *See Irons, 505 F.3d at 851.* Title 15, Section 2402 of the California Code of  
10 Regulations sets forth various factors to be considered by the Board in its parole suitability  
11 findings for murderers. The Board is directed to consider all relevant, reliable information  
12 available regarding

13           the circumstances of the prisoner’s social history; past and present  
14 mental state; past criminal history, including involvement in other  
15 criminal misconduct which is reliably documented; the base and  
16 other commitment offenses, including behavior before, during and  
17 after the crime; past and present attitude toward the crime; any  
18 conditions of treatment or control, including the use of special  
19 conditions under which the prisoner may safely be released to the  
20 community; and any other information which bears on the  
21 prisoner’s suitability for release.

22           15 Cal. Code Regs. §2402(b). The regulation also sets forth specific circumstances which tend to  
23 show unsuitability or suitability for parole:

24           (c) Circumstances Tending to Show Unsuitability. The following  
25 circumstances each tend to indicate unsuitability for release. These  
26 circumstances are set forth as general guidelines; the importance  
attached to any circumstance or combination of circumstances in a  
particular case is left to the judgment of the panel. Circumstances  
tending to indicate unsuitability include:

(1) Commitment Offense. The prisoner committed the  
offense in an especially heinous, atrocious or cruel manner....

(2) Previous Record of Violence. The prisoner on previous  
occasions inflicted or attempted to inflict serious injury on  
a victim, particularly if the prisoner demonstrated serious

1 assaultive behavior at an early age.

2 (3) Unstable social history. The prisoner has a history of  
3 unstable or tumultuous relationships with others.

4 (4) Sadistic Sexual Offenses. The prisoner has previously  
5 sexually assaulted another in a manner calculated to inflict  
6 unusual pain or fear upon the victim.

7 (5) Psychological Factors. The prisoner has a lengthy  
8 history of severe mental problems related to the offense.

9 (6) Institutional Behavior. The prisoner has engaged in  
10 serious misconduct in prison or jail.

11 (d) Circumstances Tending to Show Suitability. The following  
12 circumstances each tend to show that the prisoner is suitable for  
13 release. The circumstances are set forth as general guidelines; the  
14 importance attached to any circumstance or combination of  
15 circumstances in a particular case is left to the judgment of the  
16 panel. Circumstances tending to indicate suitability include:

17 (1) No Juvenile Record. The prisoner does not have a  
18 record of assaulting others as a juvenile or committing  
19 crimes with a potential of personal harm to victims.

20 (2) Stable Social History. The prisoner has experienced  
21 reasonably stable relationships with others.

22 (3) Signs of Remorse. The prisoner performed acts which  
23 tend to indicate the presence of remorse, such as attempting  
24 to repair the damage, seeking help for or relieving suffering  
25 of the victim, or indicating that he understands the nature  
26 and magnitude of the offense.

(4) Motivation for Crime. The prisoner committed his  
crime as the result of significant stress in his life, especially  
if the stress has built over a long period of time.

(5) Battered Woman Syndrome. At the time of the  
commission of the crime, the prisoner suffered from  
Battered Woman Syndrome, as defined in section 2000(b),  
and it appears the criminal behavior was the result of that  
victimization.

(6) Lack of Criminal History. The prisoner lacks any  
significant history of violent crime.

(7) Age. The prisoner's present age reduces the probability  
of recidivism.

(8) Understanding and Plans for Future. The prisoner has  
made realistic plans for release or has developed

1 marketable skills that can be put to use upon release.

2 (9) Institutional Behavior. Institutional activities indicate an  
3 enhanced ability to function within the law upon release.

4 15 Cal. Code Regs. § 2402(c)-(d). The foregoing factors are general guidelines; the Board must  
5 consider all relevant information. *In re Aguilar*, 168 Cal.App.4th 1479, 1487 (2nd Dist. 2008);  
6 *see also* 15 Cal. Code Regs. §2402(b) (“The fundamental consideration is public safety.”).

7 Since the overriding concern is public safety, the proper focus is on the inmate’s  
8 *current* dangerousness. *In re Lawrence*, 44 Cal. 4th at 1205. Thus, the applicable standard of  
9 review is not whether some evidence supports the reasons cited for denying parole, but whether  
10 some evidence indicates that the inmate’s release would unreasonably endanger public safety. *In*  
11 *re Shaputis*, 44 Cal.4th at 1254. In other words, there must be a rational nexus between the facts  
12 relied upon and the ultimate conclusion that the prisoner continues to be a threat to public safety.  
13 *In re Lawrence*, 44 Cal. 4th at 1227.

14 In this case, the panel of the Board presiding over petitioner’s November 16, 2006  
15 parole suitability hearing explained their decision to deny him parole as follows:

16 The Panel reviewed all information received from the public and  
17 relied on the following circumstances in concluding that the  
18 prisoner is not suitable for parole and would pose an unreasonable  
19 risk of danger or a threat to public safety if release[d] from prison.  
20 We have come to these conclusions first by the commitment  
21 offense. It was carried out in an especially cruel, very brutal, very  
22 callous manner. Again, the stabbing of a friend and that you then  
23 left him there to die without making any attempts to call for  
24 assistance to get him – to possibly get him some help. The offense  
25 again carried out in a very dispassionate manner. The offense  
26 carried out in a manner which demonstrates an exceptionally  
callous disregard for human life. The motive for the crime is  
trivial in relation to this offense. And again, I don’t know whether  
again alcohol – causative factors of alcohol or anger or the issues  
about that he put his hands on your dashboard and because he had  
food. Again, those are things that are not very clear in that sense.  
These conclusions are drawn from the Statement of Facts wherein  
the prisoner and the victim were acquaintances and they were in a  
parking lot eating and an argument erupted, a fight ensued, and the  
inmate took a knife from under the front seat of his van, and  
stabbed the victim, Dennis Jobe, to death five times in the chest



1 and rib area causing his death. The prisoner does have a pattern of  
2 criminal conduct, has failed previous grants of probation, has failed  
3 to profit from society's previous attempts to correct his criminality  
4 and attempts do include juvenile probation. As far as looking into  
5 his unstable history and prior criminality, again it does include  
6 issues of substance abuse at an early age, a long history of drug and  
7 alcohol abuse, using marijuana, alcohol, at the age of [ ] ...14 to 16  
8 years old his admission of using cocaine on a daily basis, acid four  
9 to six times per week. At the age of 16, he sustained an overdose  
10 on alcohol and sleeping pills, was placed in drug rehabilitation  
11 programs that were unsuccessful, a juvenile criminal record of  
12 minor in possession of alcohol, trespassing, and vandalism, and  
13 also again not completing high school and dropping out I believe in  
14 the eleventh grade. The prisoner has not sufficiently participated in  
15 beneficial self-help, and we urge him to continue in this area,  
16 again, to help understand the causative factors and his  
17 responsibility. Misconduct while incarcerated does include four  
18 128 counseling chronos, the most recent in 2002 for out of bounds.  
19 In regards to serious 115 disciplinary reports, a total of five, the  
20 most recent in 1995 for mutual combat. And I do want to note that  
21 a lot of the 115s reflect violence and drugs that were involved. The  
22 psychological report dated October 5th of 2006, authored by Dr.  
23 Reckert, again, is supportive of release. Under assessment of  
24 dangerousness within a controlled setting of an institution, it is  
25 seen as below average in comparison with other inmates.  
26 Assessment of dangerousness if released to the community is seen  
as below average in comparison with other inmates. And again, in  
regards to your parole plans, we find – the Panel finds that you do  
have realistic parole plans, residential. We want to indicate that  
they are satisfactory. Some concerns when you're moving in with  
an elderly individual, your grandmother. We don't know what  
things can – As far as again, how solid that would be. But again,  
you do have a place to go to. You do have acceptable employment  
plans, and you do have marketable skills in that area that the Panel  
has taken into consideration. So with that, in regards to the PC  
3042 responses, again indicating opposition to a finding of parole  
suitability and this is specifically by the Los Angeles County  
Deputy District Attorney's – District Attorney's Office. I do want  
to mention that the Deputy District Attorney is obviously here  
present and has provided a statement regarding opposition to a  
finding of parole suitability. The Panel makes the following  
findings and again that there's a need for additional in order to  
sustain progress in self-help [sic], again in order to discuss, to face,  
and understand, and cope with the stress in a nondestructive  
manner. Again, until progress is made, the prisoner continues to be  
unpredictable and a threat to others. The prisoner's gains are  
recent. Again, and this is in the area of your remorse and your  
prison behavior. Again, you must demonstrate an ability to  
maintain goals – gains, excuse me, over an extended period of  
time. Nevertheless, we should commend you for your vocational  
upgrades that you've done, your Mechanical Drawing, your

1           Woodworking, your Drafting, as well as obtaining a GED in 1989.  
2           However, these positive aspects of your behavior do not outweigh  
3           the factors of unsuitability.

3           (Transcript at 87-90.)

4           Thus, in finding petitioner not suitable for parole, the Board relied, at least in part,  
5           on the nature and gravity of his commitment offense. The circumstances of petitioner's  
6           commitment offense indeed appear to fit the state regulatory description for one that is especially  
7           aggravated. Certainly petitioner's explained motive, anger for the victim having wiped food on  
8           the dashboard of the van, was unusually trivial, even under petitioner's reported condition of  
9           stress and depression at the time. *See* 15 Cal. Code Regs. §2402 (c)(1)(E); *In re Scott*, 119  
10          Cal.App.4th 871, 893 (1st Dist. 2004) (*Scott I*) (explaining that even though all motives for  
11          murder could reasonably be deemed trivial, the relevance of this suitability factor is that one  
12          whose motive is unusually trivial or cannot be explained may be unusually unpredictable and  
13          dangerous). Additionally, the record contains some support for a determination that the offense  
14          was carried out in a dispassionate and calculated manner to the extent that petitioner retrieved a  
15          knife from under the seat of his van and used it to stab his friend, with whom he was arguing,  
16          repeatedly to his death. *See* 15 Cal. Code Regs. §2402 (c)(1)(B).

17          In order for these circumstances to support the denial of petitioner's parole, there  
18          must be some indication that they remain probative to the statutory determination of his current  
19          or future dangerousness. *See Cooke*, 606 F.3d at 1216 (quoting *In re Lawrence*, 44 Cal. 4th 3d at  
20          1214). The California Supreme Court has explained "it is not the circumstance that the crime is  
21          particularly egregious that makes a prisoner unsuitable for parole- it is the implication concerning  
22          future dangerousness that derives from the prisoner having committed that crime." *In re*  
23          *Lawrence*, 44 Cal.4th at 1207. In other words, California law authorizes the Board to consider  
24          the circumstances of the commitment offense, but only insofar as those circumstances relate to  
25          the inmate's current dangerousness. *In re Lawrence*, 44 Cal.4th at 1214.

26          ////

1           Importantly, in this case, the Board did not rely exclusively on circumstances  
2 related to petitioner’s commitment offense to support the denial of parole. The Board  
3 additionally appeared to rely on (1) petitioner’s criminal history; (2) a finding that he has an  
4 unstable social history; (3) his history of substance abuse; (4) insufficient participation in self-  
5 help therapy; (5) misconduct during incarceration; and (6) a finding that his gains were recent  
6 and needed to be sustained over a longer period of time.

7           Petitioner’s social history and record of violence were properly considered by the  
8 panel (*see* 15 Cal. Code Regs. §2402(c)(2)-(3)), as was his history of substance abuse. Like the  
9 circumstances of petitioner’s commitment offense, these are immutable factors that he is forever  
10 unable to change. Such immutable factors are relevant considerations to the extent they remain  
11 probative to a determination of petitioner’s current or future dangerousness. This is not a case in  
12 which continued reliance solely on unchanging factors has risen to the level of a due process  
13 violation. *See generally Biggs*, 334 F.3d at 916 (cautioning that “[o]ver time... should [a  
14 prisoner] continue to demonstrate exemplary behavior and evidence of rehabilitation, denying  
15 him a parole date simply because of the nature of [his] offense and prior conduct would raise  
16 serious questions involving his liberty interest in parole”) (overruled on other grounds in  
17 *Hayward*, 603 F.3d at 555, 563). Various other factors relied upon by the Board demonstrated  
18 that there was a sufficient nexus between the unchanging circumstances relied upon and the  
19 Board’s conclusion that petitioner still posed a risk of danger. These other factors also  
20 independently constitute some evidence to support the Board’s unfavorable conclusion.

21           The Board considered and relied on petitioner’s institutional behavior. *See* 15  
22 Cal. Code Regs. §§ 2402(c)(6) (serious misconduct in prison tends to show unsuitability for  
23 parole while participation in institutional activities tend to show suitability for parole). Petitioner’s  
24 record indeed reflects some serious misconduct in prison, as he has received a total of five CDC  
25 115 disciplinary reports during incarceration. “[A] CDC 115 documents misconduct believed to  
26 be a violation of law which is not minor in nature.” *In re Gray*, 151 Cal.App.4th 379, 389 (2nd

1 Dist. 2007). In 1999, petitioner was disciplined for mutual combat. The prior year, he was  
2 disciplined for behavior endangering the institution. More recently, in 2001, petitioner was  
3 disciplined for smoking and a cell fight. He has also received a few 128s, which document less  
4 serious incidents or minor misconduct. *See Id.* Most recently, petitioner received a 128 for being  
5 out of bounds in October 2002 and another for conduct the Board described as “copping an  
6 attitude” in June 2006.

7           There are no recent 115s or 128s in petitioner’s record reflecting violence.  
8 Nevertheless, behavior such as disobeying rules and “copping an attitude” still poses a risk of  
9 threat to institutional safety and security. In addition, some of petitioner’s misconduct was still  
10 near in time to the 2006 parole suitability determination. Thus, the evidence regarding  
11 petitioner’s misconduct in prison is not such that a reviewing court could conclude that it did not  
12 hold *any* probative value at that time.

13           The Board also cited petitioner’s lack of significant participation in self-help  
14 programming. Evidence in the record showed that petitioner participated in an anger  
15 management program in 1998, the Lifer Support Group in the late 1990s through 2000, and  
16 Breaking Barriers in 2002. At some point in the past petitioner had been involved in Stress  
17 Management, Cage Your Rage, and Straight Life. With respect to substance abuse programming,  
18 petitioner participated in AA in 1997 and 1998 and NA in 2004 and 2005. Petitioner reported to  
19 the Board that there was a four year period of time when no substance abuse programs were  
20 available to him. Nevertheless, even assuming the truth of this statement, on this record it was  
21 reasonable for the Board to conclude that his overall participation in self-help programming,  
22 including substance abuse programming, was somewhat limited over his many years of  
23 incarceration and that he needed to do additional work in this area before being released to  
24 parole. It was also reasonable for the Board to conclude that many of petitioner’s gains, such as  
25 remaining free of discipline, and resuming participation in substance abuse programming, were  
26 somewhat recent and that he needed to be able to sustain these positive factors for more time

1 before being found suitable for parole.

2 Despite petitioner's argument to the contrary, the Board did expressly consider  
3 many positive aspects of his conduct in prison including his extensive participation in vocations,  
4 exceptional work reports, favorable mental health reports and a psychological evaluation that was  
5 supportive of release, among other evidence of rehabilitation. Petitioner's allegation that the  
6 Board cited for the appearance of considering, but did not *actually* consider these factors, is  
7 speculative and without merit. See *James v. Borg*, 24 F.3d 20, 26 (9th Cir. 1994) ("Conclusory  
8 allegations which are not supported by a statement of specific facts do not warrant habeas  
9 relief."). Moreover, to the extent petitioner simply disagrees with the manner in which the Board  
10 weighed the evidence, or contends that the Board assigned insufficient weight to the positive  
11 factors, no relief is available because this court is precluded from re-weighing the evidence.

12 In sum, the record contains with respect to an assessment of petitioner's current  
13 dangerousness many positive factors, but also contains some negative factors that tend to show  
14 he is not suitable for parole. Due process requires only that the Board's decision be supported by  
15 some evidence in the record. The circumstances of petitioner's commitment offense, combined  
16 with the other negative factors set forth above, suffice to support the Board's November 16, 2006  
17 decision that petitioner was not yet suitable to be released on parole. Accordingly, petitioner is  
18 not entitled to relief for any of his claims regarding the Board's denial of parole.

#### 19 VI. CONCLUSION

20 For the foregoing reasons, IT IS HEREBY RECOMMENDED that the application  
21 for writ of habeas corpus be DENIED.

22 These findings and recommendations are submitted to the United States District  
23 Judge assigned to the case, pursuant to the provisions of 28 U.S.C. § 636(b)(1). Within twenty-  
24 one days after being served with these findings and recommendations, any party may file written  
25 objections with the court and serve a copy on all parties. Such a document should be captioned  
26 "Objections to Magistrate Judge's Findings and Recommendations." Any reply to the objections

1 shall be served and filed within seven days after service of the objections. Failure to file  
2 objections within the specified time may waive the right to appeal the District Court's order.  
3 *Turner v. Duncan*, 158 F.3d 449, 455 (9th Cir. 1998); *Martinez v. Ylst*, 951 F.2d 1153 (9th Cir.  
4 1991).

5 DATED: November 29, 2010

  
6 CHARLENE H. SORRENTINO  
7 UNITED STATES MAGISTRATE JUDGE  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25  
26