

Sentence Review Division
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SENTENCE REVIEW DIVISION OF THE SUPREME COURT OF MONTANA

STATE OF MONTANA,	)	Cause No. DC-41-2023-0000175
	)	
Plaintiff,	)	Ravalli County District Court
-vs-	)	
	)	Montana Twenty-First Judicial District
RYAN DAVID KNIGHT,	)	
	)	DECISION
Defendant.	)	
	)	

On July 28, 2025, the Defendant was sentenced for both the offenses below as follows: Charge I – Criminal Possession of Dangerous Drugs with the Intent to Distribute, a Felony, in violation of §45-9-103, MCA; and Charge III – Unlawful Possession of Firearm by Convicted Person, a Felony, in violation of §45-8-313, MCA: Thirty (30) years, none suspended, at a state prison to be designated by the Department of Corrections. The Defendant received credit for six hundred and ninety-seven (697) days served. On October 10, 2023, the State filed the Notice of Persistent Felony Offender Status. The State moved to dismiss Charge II, which the Court granted.

On August 6, 2026, the Defendant's Application for review of that sentence came on for hearing by Zoom videoconference before the Sentence Review Division of the Montana Supreme Court (hereafter “the Division”). The Defendant appeared from the Montana State Prison and was represented by David A. Merchant, Defense Counsel. The State was represented by Angela Auch. The Defendant did not give a statement.

Before hearing the Application, the Defendant was advised that the Division has the authority not only to reduce the sentence or affirm it but also increase it. The Defendant was further advised that there is no appeal from a decision of the Division. The Defendant acknowledged that he understood this and stated that he wished to proceed.

Rule 12, Rules of the Sentence Review Division of the Supreme Court of Montana, provides that, "The sentence imposed by the District Court is presumed correct. The sentence shall not be reduced or increased unless it is clearly inadequate or clearly excessive." (Section 46-18-904(3), MCA).

The Division, after review of the record, having held its hearing, and after deliberation finds the sentence is clearly excessive because the reasons advanced for the sentence do not justify the length of the sentence imposed given the nature of the offense and the sentences more typically imposed for similarly situated defendants.

Therefore, it is the unanimous decision of the Division that the sentence shall be **MODIFIED** to 30 years to Montana Department of Corrections, with 15 years suspended.

Pursuant to §46-18-904(3), MCA, the District Court shall resentence the Defendant in accordance with the Sentence Review Division's Decision and file an Amended Judgment.

DATED this 8th day of September, 2026.

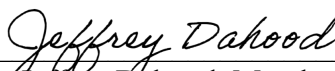
SENTENCE REVIEW DIVISION



Hon. Matthew Cuffe, Chair



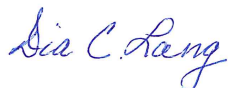
Hon. Christopher Abbott, Member



Hon. Jeffrey Dahood, Member

Copies mailed or emailed this 8th day of September, 2026, to:

Clerk of District Court – *via email*
Ryan David Knight #2116149, Defendant
Hon. Howard F. Recht – *via email*
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Board of Pardons and Parole – *via email*
Montana State Prison - Records Dept. – *via email*



Dia Lang, Office Administrator
Sentence Review Division