

**COMMUNITY
FORGIVENESS
&
RESTORATION**

**HOUSE BILL 135
SENATE BILL 942**

***PAROLE ELIGIBILITY FOR LIFE
SENTENCED CITIZENS**

**(THE BENEFITS TO SUPPORTING
AND PASSING LEGISLATION)**

Parole Review & Eligibility for Life Sentenced Citizens

HOUSE BILL No. 135, Session 2017-2018

- House Bill No. 2135, has been reintroduced as House Bill 135.
- **Did you know**, passing H.B. 135 will not cause an open flood gate to release murderers? It will only allow parole review & eligibility to transformed and rehabilitated citizens who are sentenced to Life in prison without the opportunity for parole, and who have spent 15 or more consecutive years in prison.
- **Did you know**, passing H.B. 135 will only allow parole review and eligibility to Life sentenced Citizens on a case-by-case basis? Consideration will be given to pre-conviction and post-conviction behavior, education, mental health and behavioral programming, etc.
- **Did you know**, granting parole review & eligibility to transformed and rehabilitated citizens who are sentenced to Life in prison will free up millions of dollars for our public school system, and vital human resources for impoverished communities?
- **Did you know**, Citizens who were sentenced to Life in prison, and have received commutation, do exceptionally well upon release; and have less than 1% chance of re-offending or returning to prison?

Taxpayer's Cost to Imprison Citizens for Their natural Life

- **Did you know**, the cost to house a citizen for their natural Life is astronomical, averaging more than \$870,000 over their lifetime? Citizens serving Life sentencing in Pennsylvania serve an average of 40 years before they die or are diagnosed as terminally ill.
- **Did you know**, there is an average of 133 new commits each year, with 28 incarcerated Life sentenced citizens dying each year?
- **Did you know**, Joseph Ligon of SCI-Graterford is the longest served Life sentenced citizen in Pennsylvania? He was convicted when he was a child at the age of 15 years old. He is now 78 years old and in his 63rd year in prison. It cost taxpayers approximately 2.31 million dollars. See: ("Time for Pa. to re-examine Life Without Parole", Public Interest, vol. P . 1111, Monday February 22, 2016)
- **Did you know**, Paul Studenroth was convicted at the age of 18 years old? He is 73 years old and serving his 54th year in prison. It cost taxpayers approximately 1.98 million dollars.

Age and Maturity at Release

- **Did you know**, Incarcerated citizens who are 40 years old or older and spent 20 years or more in prison are less likely to re-offend or return to prison upon release? (See: Florida Dept. of Corrections, 2001. Recidivism Report: Inmate release from Florida prisons; Hoffman, P.B. & Beck, J.L. 1984. Burnout-age at release from prison and recidivism. Journal of Criminal Justice, 12(6), 617-623)

Active in Prison Religious Programs/Fellowship

- **Did you know**, residents who have actively participated in Prison Religious Programs and Fellowship are less likely to re-offend or return to prison upon their release? (See: Johnson, B.R., Larson, D.B., & Pitts, T.C. (1997). Religious Programs, Institutional Adjustment, and Recidivism among Former Inmates in Prison Fellowship Programs. Justice Quarterly, 14(1), 145-165)

Residents with Education/Higher Education

- **Did you know**, Incarcerated citizens who have obtained an education and/or achieved higher education, (i.e. College) are less likely to re-offend or returning to prison upon their release? (See: Nuttal, J. Holman, L. & Staley, M.EA., 2003. The effects of earning a G.E.D on recidivism rates, Journals of Correctional Education, 54(3), 90-94; Vacca, J.S. 2004. Educated prisoners are less likely to return to prison, Journal of Correctional Education, 55(4), 297-305; O'Neil, Marin, correctional Higher Education: Reduced Recidivism, 41 No. 1, 1990, 28-31)

Re-entry Resources & Services

- **Did you know**, incarcerated citizens who have family and community support upon their release are less likely to re-offend or return to prison upon release? (See: Berg, M.T., & Hueber, B.M., 2011. Re-entry and the ties that bind: An Examination of social Ties, Employment and Recidivism. Justice Quarterly, 28(2), 382-410; Freisthler, M. & Godsey, M.A., 2004. Going home to stay: A Review of Collateral consequences of Conviction, Post-Incarceration Employment, and Recidivism in Ohio. U. Lol. L. Rev. 36, 525-543)
- **Did you know**, Life Without the Possibility of Parole disproportionately targets people of color, destroying the social structure in minority communities? Leaving generations of minority children without parents. People serving Life without Parole sentences are 65% Black and 8.5% Latino.
- **Did you know**, it costs the State an average of \$42,000 a year to incarcerate someone? But due to higher medical costs that amount raises to \$66,000 a year and sometimes spike upwards of \$100,000 dollars.

Costs Savings

- **Did you know**, if lawmakers start to build up Pennsylvania's infrastructure, (i.e. bridges, roadways, railways, electrical grid) and invest in renewable and clean energy, such as: solar paneling) Pennsylvania can stop using the Pa. DOC to sustain the economy in rural Pennsylvania, and dilapidating urban low income communities?

- **Did you know**, if the Pennsylvania General Assembly were to enact the provisions of H.B. 135, and 20 rehabilitated Life sentenced citizens were paroled a year, the State would save taxpayers approximately \$1,000,000 million dollars a year; and if those citizens sentenced to Life are elderly and receiving regular medical treatment or care, it would save taxpayers approximately \$2,000,000 million dollars a year?

Crime Victims Views

- **Did you know**, 2 to 1 victims prefer the Criminal Justice System to focus more on rehabilitation than punishment?
- **Did you know**, 61% of victims prefer shorter sentences and more spending on prevention and rehabilitation, rather than long prison sentences?
- **Did you know**, 89% of victims prefer more investment in schools and education, rather than more investment in prisons?
- **Did you know**, 10 to 1 victims prefer more investment in job creation, rather than more investment in prisons?
- **Did you know**, 7 to 1 victims prefer more investment in crime prevention and programs for at-risk youths, rather than more investment in prisons?
- **Did you know**, 83% victims prefer more investment in Mental Health Treatment, rather than more investment in prisons?
- **Did you know**, 73% victims prefer more investment in Drug Treatment, rather than in prisons?
- **Did you know**, 2 to 1 victims prefer more investment in Community Supervision, rather than more investment in prisons?
- **Did you know**, 70% victims prefer more prosecutors to focus on solving neighborhood problems and stopping repeat crimes through rehabilitation, even if it means fewer convictions and prison sentences? (Source: “Crime Survivors Speak”, National Survey of Victims’ Views on Safety and Justice conducted by: Alliance for Safety and Justice, April 2016)