

SECOND LOOK SENTENCING



A CLOSER LOOK AT WHO

MICHIGAN INCARCERATES



NATIONAL LIFERS OF AMERICA, INC.
CHAPTER 1012
LENOX TWP., MI 48048

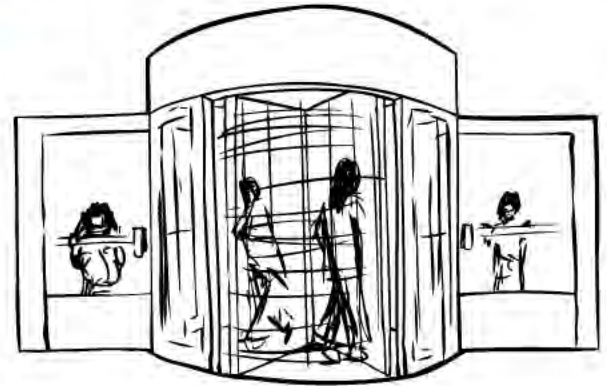
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PREFACE

This booklet will take you on a journey that explains who the Michigan Department of Corrections (MDOC) currently incarcerates. As you digest the highlighted stories, I want to caution you against thinking that we have included the most unique stories just to tug at your heart. Actually, these stories are not unique. These stories can be witnessed everyday living inside the MDOC—a place I've lived for nearly 30 years. I've observed first hand many of the men within this booklet. Despite the nature of the stories you will read, it would be wrong to say that every person serving a life sentence turns into a paragon of virtue, or that prison as a whole is a place full of reformed beings, singing songs and dancing across the prison yard like a musical. Quite the contrary. Prison does contain people who pose a threat to society and it is a necessary component to maintain a civil society.

Sadly, most prisoners are either drug abusers, sexual offenders, or petty criminals, who strive each day to get high, take out their pains on others, and rob their neighbors to fill their wants.

Yet, these are the very individuals that are being released back into our community time and time again. These individuals are destined to commit more crimes and, for some, even graduate to more serious crimes. These troubled men and women are the statistical average in prison. But these are the people who usually get paroled. This reality is why we need to take a serious look at our prison system.



As a former prisoner, I can tell you that release from prison many times revolves around politics, a need for bed space in the system, or other factors unrelated to recidivism risk. Yet, release from prison should be based on one factor alone: risk to public safety. You may think that

determining who is a risk to public safety is an impossible task, and the MDOC may claim that this is the toughest question they deal with on a day-to-day basis. However, statistical measures such as education level, age, and conduct while incarcerated, provide rather accurate evidence of whether an inmate will be a risk to society.

Even when these risk factors show a person to be of low risk, the parole board is often times prohibited from considering the person. The reason is that the parole board lacks the authority to release certain inmates such as people serving life or lengthy sentences. People serving life or long sentences (20-plus years) make up more than 30% of the prison population. To address the bottleneck these prisoners place on the prison system, the parole board is forced to release individuals who clearly pose a greater risk to society and, at the same time, continue to incarcerate individuals who clearly do not.

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My situation exemplifies how our prison system continues to incarcerate people who pose no threat to society and then claims differently. In 2023, the parole board denied my commutation, saying my claim for release “lacks merit.” In April of 2024, I was re-sentenced as a juvenile lifer. At the sentencing hearing, the prosecutor said my “accomplishments were exemplary.” The judge said, “We need people like Joshua out here. I hope you can make a difference here in Detroit.” Approximately one year after claiming I lacked merit for release, the parole board paroled me the day after my parole interview. Truth be told, nothing about my character or threat to society changed from 2023 to 2024. The only thing that changed was my sentence. This change allowed the parole board to stop making unsubstantiated, negative claims about my risk level. Before I was re-sentenced, I was not legally eligible for parole, so the parole board didn’t perform an **actual** risk assessment on me. This booklet is about the numerous other people who still sit in prison. They pose no threat to society—like me—while the parole board and others in the criminal justice system claim otherwise.

The silver lining is that current legislation, called **Second Look Sentencing**, is designed to enhance the parole evaluation and selection process. **Second Look Sentencing** legislation is quite literally about taking another look at individuals who have served well over a decade in prison and have used their time wisely to change their lives. This legislation creates a process that begins with a judge conducting a comprehensive review of the inmate, a review that takes into account a variety of risk factors to insure that the person has shown that a sentence adjustment is warranted. If the judge decides to re-sentence the person, the review process then requires the parole board to evaluate the person for potential release. **Second Look Sentencing** legislation would allow our criminal justice system to acknowledge and release those people who can contribute to society, like the justice system did in my case.

Having lived in prison for almost three decades, I can tell you that more often than not, the wrong people are being released. This often occurs because once a sentence is imposed there is no mechanism within the law that allows a judge to re-sentence an inmate. And the parole board lacks authority to release an inmate before he or she fulfills the sentence imposed by the judge. The incarcerated people highlighted in this booklet are no different than myself. The parole board deems each of them a threat only because of the sentence imposed. Were these people to get a different sentence, the system would commend them for their transformation. This is why **Second Look Sentencing** legislation is badly needed.

Joshua Puckett



“Our justice system is one of the few unaccountable systems in the country. It doesn’t make decisions based on best practices...or in the best interest of the young people and families involved. As a result, there is a 70 percent recidivism rate. The decision makers can administer this misery and not take any responsibility for the outcome.”

— James Bell

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**AS YOU READ THE INDIVIDUAL STORIES IN THIS BOOKLET,
WE ASK YOU TO PONDER A VERY IMPORTANT QUESTION:**



ARE THE PEOPLE HIGHLIGHTED IN THIS BOOKLET THE TYPE OF PEOPLE
WE SHOULD BE, AND NEED TO BE, SPENDING APPROXIMATELY

\$48,000

PER PERSON EACH YEAR
TO CONTINUE TO INCARCERATE?



DEFINITION OF TERMS

used within this booklet that you may not be familiar with...

Aging-Out Process

Also referred to as desistance or spontaneous remission, the aging-out process is the tendency for youths to reduce the frequency of their offending behavior as they age. Aging-out is thought occur among all groups of offenders.

Aider and Abettor

A person who assisted the primary perpetrator. For example, a lookout person or getaway driver. Can an Aider and Abettor serve more prison time than the person who actually pulled the trigger? Unfortunately, yes.

Felony Murder

In Michigan a person is guilty of felony murder when a death occurs during the course of a statutorily enumerated felony (a felony listed in statute). For example, a death occurring during a robbery, arson, etc. A person convicted of felony murder must be sentenced to nonparolable life.

First-Degree (Premeditated) Murder

Michigan specifies a variety of homicide offenses, with first-degree and felony murder being the most severe. In Michigan, a person is found guilty of first-degree murder when murder is perpetrated by means of poison, lying in wait, or any other willful, deliberate, and premeditated killing. A person convicted of first-degree murder must be sentenced to nonparolable life.

Indeterminate Sentence

A sentence to imprisonment for a maximum period defined by law, subject to termination by the parole board at any time after the person serves the minimum period. For example, a 5-15 year sentence; the person is sentenced to 15 years, but the parole board can release the person at or after 5 years.

Parolable Life Sentence

A sentence to life in prison with the possibility of parole. A person who received a parolable life sentence can be paroled after serving 15 years (if the sentence was imposed before October 1, 1992, the person can be paroled after serving 10 years).

Nonparolable Life Sentence

A person who receives a nonparolable life sentence must remain in prison until he or she dies. Unless this sentence is changed, the person cannot be released. Also referred to as life without the possibility of parole (LWOP).

Recidivism

The act of repeating a previous mistake or bad choice. For most research, recidivism means returning to prison or committing a new offense within 3 years of release from prison.

Second-Degree Murder

Second-degree murder in Michigan is defined as an intentional killing without premeditation, a killing caused by the perpetrator's reckless indifference to human life, or an assault causing death without the intention to kill. A person convicted of second-degree murder can be sentenced to parolable life or any number of years.

Truth in Sentencing

Implemented in Michigan (December 1998), truth in sentencing requires a person serve his or her complete minimum sentence before the parole board can grant a parole. People sentenced to prison before December of 1998 can earn disciplinary credits that allow the parole board to parole them before serving the minimum sentence.

INTRODUCTION



Many incarcerated people were exposed to violence at a very young age, whether as an observer or victim. This exposure left many of these kids in pain and anguish with no means to adequately address their emotions. As a result, many of these kids went on to become a product of their life experience. Angry, hurt, and believing violence is an acceptable method to deal with problems, these kids victimized others as they became teenagers and young adults. This is not to say that all kids who are exposed to violence and trauma go on to commit criminal acts. Some kids are very resilient and respond in a more socially appropriate manner. But unfortunately some kids aren't as strong.

When one of these kids, who have been hurt by their circumstances, grows older and commits an awful crime, his or her life experience tends to be forgotten as people get caught in the emotion of the moment. The Michigan criminal justice system compounds this issue by defining the person by his or her worst mistake. Did you know that Michigan incarcerates people longer than any of our neighboring states? Or that the MDOC (Michigan Department of Corrections) sentences people to life in prison at one of the highest rates in the United States? Because of these practices, Michigan now has the most elderly prison population in the United States.

The reality is that a significant number of people who make criminal decisions, do so not because they are horrible people, but because they are emotionally hurt and severely lost in life. There are many people in this group that do not want to be the horrible person reflected in their criminal choice. They go to prison and make resounding efforts to discover:

- A) What drove them to make such an awful decision; and
- B) To take significant steps to correct their character flaws.

Oftentimes this self-reflection process requires a person to look back at their childhood experience and figure out why they projected their hurt and trauma onto others. This process helps many incarcerated people take corrective steps to become the quality person they always aspired to be. These incarcerated people endlessly try to keep their awful decisions from defining who they are for the rest of their lives. Sadly, despite these efforts, the Michigan criminal justice system continues to say these incarcerated people are still horrible people who can never change.



This booklet was created so the public can learn about the people Michigan incarcerates. Their stories will profile many instances of how hurt people, hurt people. For some of these incarcerated people, the awful choices they made have motivated them to endlessly try to rectify their actions.

LAWERENCE LOWE-BEY #137849

A SPOTLIGHT ON CHILDHOOD TRAUMA

Lawerence Lowe-Bey was born and raised in the City of Detroit. At the age of 16, Lawerence's father was murdered, shot in the head and leg. People in the neighborhood told Lawerence what had occurred, and he immediately went to the crime scene. At such an impressionable age, Lawerence, along with his mother and siblings, saw his father, lying dead, with blood spattered on his face.

Losing his father and seeing him lie dead was very emotional and traumatic for Lawerence. Without any counseling for his pain and anguish, Lawerence turned to alcohol and drugs as a coping mechanism, and he dropped out of high school. The next year, at the age of 17, Lawerence married and started a family - the family he felt he lost with his father's passing. However, the emotional scars of the night his father was murdered remained with him.



Lawerence attempted to get a job to care for his new family, but he was unable to shed the weight of the world. Lawerence quit his job and turned to selling drugs and stealing as a means of supporting his family and his drug habit. It didn't take long before Lawerence was arrested for breaking and entering. He was sentenced to prison for 1½ to 5 years.

While in prison, Lawerence's brother and Mr. Wilson had a dispute. Mr. Wilson put Lawerence's brother in the hospital and shot into his mother's house. Upon release from prison, Lawerence got drunk and stopped by his mother's home. Unexpectedly, Mr. Wilson appeared at the house. Lawerence was unaware that Mr. Wilson and his brother had settled their differences, and Mr. Wilson no longer posed a threat to his family. Fearing for his family's safety, Lawerence grabbed a gun and fatally shot Mr. Wilson. After seeing his father murdered, Lawerence was not going to let Mr. Wilson harm his mother and brother.

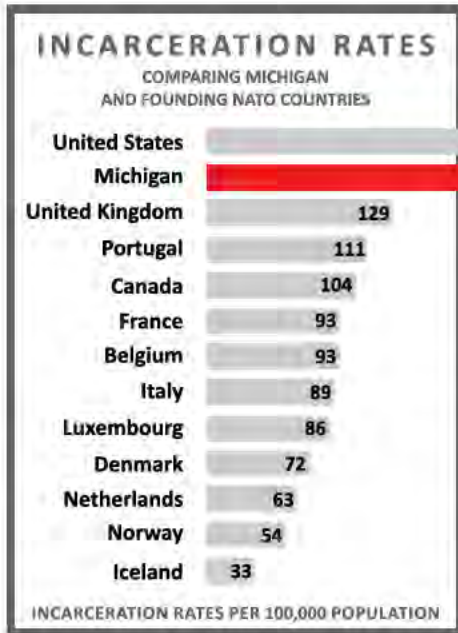
As a result of his hasty decision and incorrect belief that he needed to protect his family, Lawerence was convicted of first-degree murder and sentenced to mandatory life in prison. Having learned Mr. Wilson posed no threat to his family, Lawerence entered prison understanding the gravity of his actions, and his conduct in prison exemplifies that.

Through his tremendous work and personal growth, former Warden Shirley Harry has twice recommended Lawerence for a commutation (2007 and 2009). Yet he still remains incarcerated at the age of 71, having served almost 50 years in prison.



During his 49 years of incarceration, Lawrence has only received four Class I misconducts with the last one occurring more than a decade ago. He has earned his G.E.D. and an associate's degree; he needs only 20 more credits for his bachelor's degree. Lawrence has earned Paralegal, Culinary Art, and Horticulture certifications. He has also taken many rehabilitative programs, including alcohol and drug classes, to help him work through the bottled up pain from losing his father and the emotional anguish from taking Mr. Wilson's life.

Through his participation in numerous programs, Lawrence now knows how his concealed emotions shaped him into the person he became. That anger and hurt propelled him into taking Mr. Wilson's life and traumatizing Mr. Wilson's family, in the same way the loss of his father traumatized him. Through his tremendous work and personal growth, former Warden Shirley Harry has twice recommended Lawrence for a commutation (2007 and 2009). Yet he remains incarcerated at the age of 71, having served almost 50 years in prison.



**SEE HOW MICHIGAN'S INCARCERATION RATES
STAND OUT INTERNATIONALLY**

In the U.S., incarceration extends beyond prisons and local jails to include other systems of confinement. The U.S. and state incarceration rates in this graph include people held by these other parts of the justice system, so they may be slightly higher than commonly reported incarceration rates that only include prisons and jails. Details on the data are available in *States of Incarceration: The Global Context*.

Source: <https://www.prisonpolicy.org/global/2021.html>



**ACCORDING TO THE
2022 MDOC STATISTICAL REPORT
THE COST OF OPERATING
MICHIGAN PRISONS IS:**

\$1,886,145,353

One BILLION, Eight Hundred Eighty Six MILLION, One Hundred Forty Five THOUSAND, Three Hundred Fifty Three DOLLARS

JAMIE MEADE #232516

A SPOTLIGHT ON INJUSTICE & REHABILITATION



JAMIE AND HIS MOTHER

Jamie Meade was convicted of accessory to felony murder. In the process of a robbery, Jamie's co-defendant shot two people, one fatally. His co-defendant was sentenced to 12 years in prison and released more than 19 years ago. Despite not physically harming either victim, Jamie remains incarcerated more than 30 years later.

Jamie's sentencing judge, the Honorable Sharon Finch, wrote the following letter on August 7, 2022, to the parole board about Jamie and his case. The letter has been retyped for easier reading, but the actual document was provided for this booklet. (See page 9).

TO THE PAROLE BOARD:

I am writing in support of the Application for Pardon or Commutation of Sentence of Jamie L. Meade, #A232516. I was the Trial and Sentencing Judge on this case in 1993 in the Wayne County Circuit Court, 3rd Judicial Circuit. I retired from the bench in 2000. I have never forgotten this case because the outcome troubled me. The law was served, but fundamental fairness was not. Mr. Meade went to prison when he was 19 years old. He is now 48 years old. He has been in prison for 29 years.

This is the only time I have ever written to the Parole Board on behalf of an inmate. Mr. Meade's case was very unusual, and in my opinion, the sentence, though mandatory, was unjust. I had no choice in sentence under the law for the crime of Felony Murder. Felony Murder is a crime which occurs when someone is participating in a felony and another person dies, whether or not the defendant does the killing himself. In this case, Mr. Meade did not do the killing.

Mr. Meade was young, and acted stupidly and impulsively. A young man was fatally shot and a young woman injured. Mr. Meade was NOT the "triggerman." The shooter, who testified that he shot accidentally first (the killing) and a second time in fear (the injury,) was convicted of a lesser offense and was sentenced to only 12 years in prison, though it was he who actually did the killing. Mr. Meade was convicted of Felony Murder (which I believe was a just conviction under the law though not in equity) and sentenced to life without parole. (As I recall, if he had any prior offenses, they were minor juvenile matters.)

I have been told that Mr. Meade's file (which I have not seen and am not entitled to see) may have an error in it, and may indicate in some document(s) that HE actually shot the gun and killed the victim. He did not. The "triggerman" was someone else, who has been out of prison for almost 17 years. If that error does exist in the file, it should be corrected, since it may be influencing your decision. PLEASE CHECK THIS OUT BEFORE YOU DECIDE THIS APPLICATION.

Since his conviction, Mr. Meade has achieved educational and in-house community service accomplishments beyond that of any inmate I have ever seen in my 25 years on the bench. He lists all this in his Application. He obtained a Bachelor's Degree in Interdisciplinary Studies with Concentrations in Criminal Justice and Legal Studies. He is currently pursuing a Master of Divinity in an online program from the Chicago Theological Seminary (CTS) through a unique collaboration between MDOC and CTS. His goals are to mentor troubled youth as an ordained minister, complete law school, earn a Ph.D., and teach criminology at the university level. Certainly few would understand these social challenges more.

In the last two years, he was admitted to divinity school on a scholarship and is studying long-distance to be a minister. In the midst of this COVID time, he maintains a B average, which I find impressive under his circumstances. Covid has prevented him from seeing his mother for over 2 years. She is getting older and this is a great hardship to them both.

He is remorseful, has taken responsibility and apologized to the living victim and the family of the deceased victim. He has had no misconducts for many years in prison. He has become an educated adult. He has never had a wife, a child, a home of his own. He worries about his mother, who is getting older, and wants to be able to support her so she doesn't have to work.

It is ironic that, considering the direction Mr. Meade was heading at age 19 when this crime was committed, he probably would have never achieved this level of education, focus, and aspiration in later life absent from the crime and sentence. But life is like that. Things happen, and things - and people- change. I think the time has come to change the sentence, though a judge would have no power to do so. Only you can perform this miracle for him

At this point, he has served 29 years in prison, I believe that is more than sufficient for this crime, and I ask that his Application be granted. If I were sentencing today, had discretion, and was not bound by the mandatory sentence, I probably would have sentenced him to no more than his co-defendant, who was convicted of the lesser offense, and Mr. Meade would have walked out of prison 19 years ago. I was bound by the felony murder law. The Parole Board and the Governor, however, are not so bound, and you can right this injustice by recommending commutation.

Thank you for your consideration. I hope that you, the Parole Board and Governor, can see your way toward giving this now 48 year old man the second chance he so richly deserves.

HE HAS PAID HIS DEBT TO SOCIETY. HE IS A CHANGED PERSON. HE CAN DO GOOD IN THE WORLD. I believe he should be given a chance to live a responsible adult life "on the outside." I hope you agree.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

SHARON TEVIS FINCH P13420
CIRCUIT JUDGE, THIRD CIRCUIT COURT OF MICHIGAN (RETIRED)

PHOTOCOPY OF ACTUAL DOCUMENT

TO THE PAROLE BOARD:

I am writing in support of the Application for Pardon or Commutation of Sentence of Jarrie L. Meade, #4222510. I was the Trial and Sentencing Judge on his case in 1993 in the Wayne County Circuit Court, 3rd Judicial Circuit. I retired from the bench in 2000. I have never forgotten this case because the outcome troubled me. The law was served, but fundamental fairness was not. Mr. Meade went to prison when he was 19 years old. He is now 48 years old. He has been in prison for 29 years.

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SHARON TEVIS FINCH P13420
CIRCUIT JUDGE, THIRD CIRCUIT COURT OF MICHIGAN (RETIRED)

Mandatory minimum sentences are not necessary to ensure sufficient punishment – and actually create unjust, excessive results that make us less safe.

- ➡ Eliminating mandatory minimum sentences does not mean that people will not be punished or imprisoned – it means courts won't have to imprison people indiscriminately, without considering factors that matter.
- ➡ Mandatory minimum sentences require courts to send people to prison even if prison is unnecessary to keep the public safe, or keep people in prison past the point at which they pose a danger to others.
- ➡ Mandatory minimum sentences deny courts the ability to use more cost-effective alternatives to incarceration, like drug or mental health court programs.
- ➡ Mandatory minimum sentences make the public less safe by wasting expensive prison resources on the wrong people – money that can't be spent preventing crime.



Source: Families for Just Reform | The Case Against Mandatory Minimum Sentences

ROBERT C. REDMOND, JR. #203184

A SPOTLIGHT ON INJUSTICE & REHABILITATION



Robert C. Redmond, Jr., participated in a conspiracy to armed robbery and provided a gun that was used in that robbery. During the robbery, one of his co-defendants panicked and fatally shot the victim, Mr. Edward Smith. Because Robert was not at the scene of the crime, he failed to fully understand his culpability as an aider and abettor. He went to trial, was convicted, and sentenced to serve life in prison without the possibility of parole.

On November 18, 1981, at the age of 17, Robert enlisted in the U.S. Army. While overseas in Germany, his then girlfriend became pregnant. During her pregnancy, she was transferred back stateside to Arizona. Five years older than Robert, she wanted to make her career in the service. Robert's desire was to be with his girlfriend



and soon-to-be child. After 27 months in the Army, Robert was honorably discharged and moved to Arizona to be with his family. Sadly, things didn't work out between the couple, and Robert moved back to his hometown of Detroit. Robert returned home disappointed about his failed relationship and the end of his military career. Back in his former neighborhood, and uncertain about what to do with his life, Robert ended up turning to street life.

A few years into the street life, he got involved in a conspiracy to commit an armed robbery. His co-defendant didn't have a weapon, so Robert provided the weapon to be used. There was not a plan to harm anyone, only to take the victim's money. Even though Robert did not participate in the robbery, he never wanted anyone to be hurt. However, in the midst of the robbery, his co-defendant panicked and shot Mr. Smith, who later died from the injuries from the gunshot wound.

Robert entered prison a young man (age 24). He was equally troubled over what he had done and over the sentence he received. His mental state and emotions showed through his conduct during his first few years in prison. There was a point when Robert realized he still had a choice to become the person he chose to be. As a result, Robert set out to ensure what he did in the past would not shape who he would become.

While in prison, Robert participated in over 30 self-help and educational programs/classes.

These programs and classes included:



- The Inside-Out Prison Exchange, University of Michigan, Dearborn
- Criminal Justice and Academic Achievement, Siena Heights University
- Advanced Social Science, Adrian College
- Personal Writing IV, Adrian College



These four college courses taught him how to actually learn, and how to study for assignments and get the most out of it. These classes also taught him not to be afraid to learn.

Of all the classes and programs that he has taken, Building Trades (carpentry) has had the most impact on Robert. With his new skills, Robert feels a sense of confidence that he can get a decent-paying job, maintain his own home, and help others maintain their homes as well. Also, Robert's FDIC Money Smart class gave him the understanding of how to obtain financial security along with his carpentry skills. His trade skills and financial knowledge have given Robert confidence in himself and a means through which he can assist others.

Robert is no longer the young adult who entered prison. His transformation shines through his conduct and work ethic. Robert has received only two Class I misconducts in 35 years. His last misconduct was 17 years ago and none of his misconducts involved any form of violence. Robert has a pristine work history. He has never received a poor work evaluation, let alone be fired from any prison work assignment. Prison staff has recognized Robert's character and work ethic, and has shown their trust in him by assigning him to numerous jobs that require a high-security clearance.

Today, at 59 years old, Robert has grown tremendously. He has developed a great deal of respect for law and order. His heart still aches over the loss his actions caused, and his conduct every day in prison shows he seeks to mend the pain that still exists today. **Most importantly, Robert does not want to ever have a victim at his hands again!**

Study: Michigan Among the States with the Most Elderly Prisoners Serving Life Without Parole

Source: WKAR Public Media | By Sarah Lehr | Published June 23, 2022

Older adults make up a disproportionate number of Michigan's longest-term prisoners, a new report finds.

In Michigan, 58% of the more than 4,800 people serving life sentences without the possibility of parole are over age 50, according to the analysis from The Sentencing Project, an organization that advocates for countering mass incarceration.

The report defines prisoners over age 50 as "elderly" in part because of the negative health effects of incarceration. And lead researcher Ashley Nellis says prison contributes to a loss of dignity.

The report examines 20 states where researchers could access complete data sets and found that, in Michigan, 86% of the life without parole prisoners over age 50 had already spent two decades or more behind bars — the highest rate of all the states studied. The vast majority

of people serving such sentences have been convicted of violent crimes, including 72% who've been sentenced for homicide, according to the study. Even so, Nellis says research indicates older people are less likely to reoffend.

"To incarcerate somebody past, you know, their 40s and 50s and 60s and claiming that it's for public safety reasons, it's just not borne out in the data," she said.

The study argues incarcerating the elderly is costly for taxpayers. Among other reforms, it suggests governors should more commonly use clemency to reduce sentences and that state laws should expand opportunities for compassionate release based on advanced age.

In Michigan, the parole board may choose to grant early release to someone because of a serious or terminal medical condition, although people sentenced to crimes punishable by life without parole are excluded from eligibility.

ANNA BUSHARD #184011

A SPOTLIGHT ON THE ELDERLY & HANDICAPPED

Anna Bushard was a wife and mother of six children. During her sixth pregnancy, Anna's husband was involved in a fatal accident. This tragedy left Anna widowed and solely responsible to care for her children. Anna quickly got a part-time job at the Department of Social Services and began collecting social security benefits to help make ends meet.

While working and caring for her children, Anna was active in her community. She volunteered at the Department of Social Services on her days off because she enjoyed helping others in need.

For the first time in her life, at the age of 48, Anna found herself involved with the criminal justice system. And she faced the most serious charge, conspiracy to commit first-degree murder. Anna's daughter and son-in-law conspired with Mr. Hill, who fatally shot Mr. Fancher. Law enforcement charged Anna as a co-conspirator. The fatal shooting involved allegations about the victim inappropriately touching one of her grandchildren, a claim Anna never believed to be true. Even though she neither physically took part in, nor was present for the shooting, the prosecutor charged her with conspiracy to murder.



Anna was convicted and was sentenced to serve the rest of her life in the Michigan Department of Corrections (MDOC). This transition was particularly hard for Anna. She never fathomed being involved with the criminal justice system, and she was saddened over the death of Mr. Fancher. Anna was also frightened about prison, losing contact with her children, and the daily interaction she enjoyed with her grandchildren, especially her grandson Brad, who was living with Anna prior to her incarceration.

When Anna first entered prison, she engrossed herself in her prison job as a means of coping. Anna also tried to stay connected to her children and grandchildren. Despite imprisonment shaking Anna's world and the loss of Mr. Fancher sitting heavily on her heart, Anna's work habits and desire to help others remained. She worked at every Michigan State Industries at the women's prison, and she has remained employed for 39 years with excellent work evaluations. Anna has become a devoted member of the National Lifer's of America (NLA), a prisoner organization that promotes rehabilitation and social justice, and that donates to struggling people in local communities.

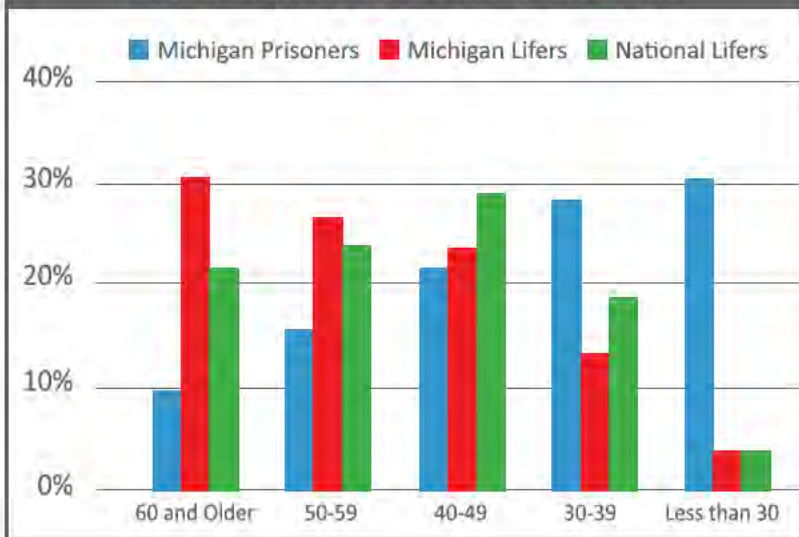
DID YOU KNOW...

In Michigan, people who never physically harmed anyone (called aiders and abettors) can receive the same and even greater sentences than the actual perpetrator. This often means aiders and abettors will receive mandatory life or lengthy sentences without ever physically harming anyone. To highlight this injustice, read Jamie Meade's profile on page 8.

While helping others, Anna also took advantage of every opportunity she got to work on herself. She completed numerous programs, but the Chance for Life (CFL) program really inspired Anna. The CFL classes on critical thinking, parenting, and becoming a person of influence have personally impacted her life. She has seen how these classes have impacted the other women around her. Anna remains active in CFL, decades after getting involved.

Unfortunately, Anna's compassion to help others and her community has not aided her health. About 17 years ago, Anna fell a few times, struggling to hold her balance. These falls put Anna in a wheelchair. Osteoporosis, heart malfunctions and back problems have kept her wheelchair bound. Being in a wheelchair, however, has not stopped Anna from helping the other women and her prison community. At 86 years of age, she still religiously assists with CFL and attends every NLA meeting. But the criminal justice system still defines Anna by her conviction and continues to keep her incarcerated 39 years later.

CURRENT AGE OF LIFE-SENTENCED PEOPLE



*Approximately 5,000 people are serving life sentences in Michigan and three quarters of them are ineligible for parole. Michigan has the fifth-largest population of people serving life without parole (LWOP) in the United States.**

*Michigan Department of Corrections (2022). Report to the Legislature; Michigan Department of Corrections. 2021 Statistical report.

AGE FACTOR

People serving life are significantly older than the general prison population; nearly half are at least 50 years old. As of 2020, 10% of the overall prison population was at least 60 but 31% of the life-sentenced population was 60 and older.

Age is an important factor to consider, as aging in prison is an expensive investment for states, particularly considering the low recidivism rate among older persons, even if they committed violence in the past.¹ The annual per-person cost of imprisonment in Michigan ranges from \$34,000 to \$48,000 depending on security level. Beyond these costs are medical costs, which rise with age, running about \$8,000 for medical, dental, and psychological services per incarcerated person.²

¹ Antenageli, L. & Durose, M.R. (2021). Recidivism of prisoners released in 24 states in 2008: A 10-year follow up. Bureau of Justice Statistics.

² Michigan Department of Corrections (2022). Report to the Legislature; Michigan Department of Corrections. 2021 Statistical report.

DO YOU THINK THAT ANN BUSHARD IS DESERVING OF A SECOND LOOK?



Do you think that releasing Anna would be a threat to the community, wheelchair bound and 86 years old? Is this humane treatment? You can make a difference in Anna's life and many other individuals who deserve a Second Look at their unjust sentences. Just scan the QR on the left to get in touch with your state representatives.

DWIGHT HENLEY # 246521

A SPOTLIGHT ON EDUCATION & REHABILITATION



Dwight Henley was an only child, and his parents worked in the automotive industry. By the age of 13, Dwight began drinking and displaying emotional issues. His drinking turned into drug use shortly after his parents abruptly divorced when he was 15 years old. By the age of 17, he had been expelled from one school and began selling drugs to fund a party lifestyle. Dwight's drug dealing and lifestyle led to many run-ins with the law.

At the age of 21, Dwight Henley fatally shot Mr. Gould during a factitious drug deal. Dwight wanted to plead guilty to a lesser charge, but incorrect advice from his attorney left him believing the only way he would ever get out of prison was to get acquitted. Subsequently, Dwight went to trial, was convicted, and sentenced to serve the rest of his life in prison. His co-defendant, who stabbed the victim multiple times, received immunity and was paroled in 2006 after serving 13 years for three unrelated felony offenses.

While in prison, Dwight came to see the personal characteristics that led to his past conduct and the broken person he had become. This disheartening realization motivated Dwight to participate in numerous rehabilitative programs and drove his desire to become the quality person he aspired to be as a kid.



Dwight with his grandparents



Dwight training Leader Dogs for the Blind



DOES THIS SOUND LIKE JUSTICE?

Dwight wanted to plead guilty to a lesser charge, but incorrect advice from his attorney left him believing the only way he would ever get out of prison was to get acquitted... His co-defendant, who stabbed the victim multiple times, received immunity and was paroled in 2006 after serving 13 years for three unrelated felony offenses.

Dwight participated in numerous MDOC rehabilitative programs including:



- Restorative Justice, Chance for Life (Tier I and II)
- Cage Your Rage
- Thinking for a Change (T4C)
- Values & Beliefs
- Violence Prevention Program (VPP)

Dwight was selected as one of nine people serving a life sentence to tutor other prisoners in T4C, VPP, and BRIDGES (a domestic violence program). He also facilitates the MDOC's first group Cognitive Gang & Gun Intervention Program.

DID YOU KNOW...

**With a master's degree
there is unanimity among
research results:
recidivism is down to 0%.
Zero. None.**

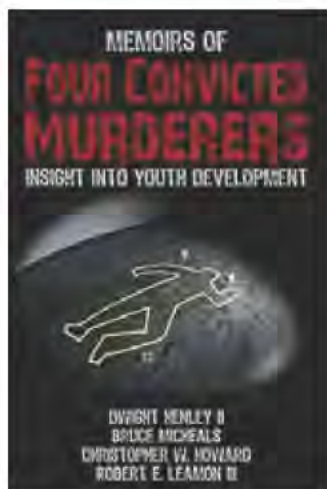
The words in () are added;
Source: Education Behind Bars, (January, 2012),
Sunbury Press, Inc., Camp Hill, PA 17011. (p. 3)

Dwight's college achievements while in prison include:

- Associate's Degree in Paralegal Studies, the Paralegal Institute (2000)
- Associate of Arts, Indiana University (2006)
- Bachelor's Degree in General Business, Indiana University (2010)
- Master's Degree in Business Administration, Adams State University (2020)
- Accounting certifications from Kelly School of Business and Louisiana State University (**making Dwight eligible for the CPA exam**)

In total, he has accumulated more than 235 college credit hours. He now seeks to pursue a doctoral degree in business or psychology, and he aspires to one day teach as a college professor.

Dwight's transformation is reflected in his prison conduct. Under the MDOC's current misconduct classification system, his last Class I misconduct was 21 years ago; the last Class II, 18 years ago. Dwight has spent 11 years training dogs for the legally blind and family adoption. He has participated in many charitable activities to help people in need, both in prison and for the community. He spent five years as a volunteer teaching college-level classes to other incarcerated people. In a file review, a Parole Board member made note, "...he (Mr. Henley) has basically been a good inmate in his 24 years, but there are no extraordinary circumstances that would merit consideration at this time." Dwight is now 53 years old and has served 29 years in prison.



**THIS BOOK,
CO-AUTHORED BY
DWIGHT HENLEY IS
AVAILABLE FOR SALE
ONLINE FROM**

amazon.com

*All proceeds go to
Michigan's
Crime Victims Fund*

Memoirs of Four Convicted Murderers is a practical and personal criminal rehabilitation text. From the opening chapter readers are challenged to learn about criminal characteristics and identify them in the authors' memoirs. The memoirs provide real-life accounts of seemingly normal people who failed to identify and control their criminal characteristics. Among other things, the memoirs include material on drug sales and abuse; bullying, fighting; steroids; peer pressure, effects of divorce; insecurities; athletic prowess and achievements; college-life; climbing the corporate ladder; martial arts; juvenile pregnancy; crime and murder; life in prison as a juvenile; losing loved-ones while incarcerated; remorse; regret; and shame.

JOSEPH S. DIXON #208552

A SPOTLIGHT ON CHILDHOOD TRAUMA & REHABILITATION

At the age of seven, Joseph S. Dixon learned his father had been murdered. With the loss of his father, so went Joseph's sense of security and loss of his childhood hero. His heartache and pain turned into anger when Joseph learned that his grandfather was the one who had taken his father's life. Learning this at age 11, Joseph vowed he would take his grandfather's life out of vengeance.

Angry and hurt, Joseph's conduct deteriorated. He began using alcohol and drugs, and he began projecting his pain unto others with violence. Outside of the home, Joseph adopted street codes and mannerisms, becoming a compulsively precarious teenager.

Still wanting to avenge his father's death, Joseph felt an urge to first ask his grandmother about what happened that fateful day. Unaware of Joseph's plan for vengeance, his grandmother told Joseph about the circumstances surrounding his father's death. That day Joseph learned that his father's temper scared his grandfather to the point of murder.

Joseph's anger toward his grandfather eased, however he remained an angry young adult. At the age of 22, Joseph got into a heated dispute with a person over the amount of rock cocaine that had been sold to him. In an angry state, Joseph knocked the victim to the ground with a punch and fatally shot him in the head. Joseph was quickly arrested, convicted of first-degree murder. He was sentenced to remain in prison until he dies.



CURRENT AGE AMONG PEOPLE SERVING LONG-TERM AND LIFE SENTENCES

| Sentence Length | Number 50 and Older | Total | Percent 50 and Older of Total |
|-----------------|---------------------|-------|-------------------------------|
| 20-29 | 1,095 | 3,537 | 31% |
| 30-39 | 461 | 1,344 | 34% |
| 40-49 | 294 | 608 | 48% |
| 50-100 | 297 | 492 | 60% |
| LIFE | 2,650 | 4,839 | 55% |

For years Joseph was afraid of dying in prison, so he lied about his involvement in the crime. His lies got the Innocent Clinic involved, but Joseph's guilt was getting the best of him. This guilt motivated Joseph to address his anger problems. He immersed himself in numerous prison programs.





SOME OF THESE PROGRAMS INCLUDED:

CONFLICT RESOLUTION

CRITICAL THINKING

ANGER MANAGEMENT



SUBSTANCE ABUSE AWARENESS

MEDIATION TRAINING

PRISONER OBSERVATION AIDE

As the Innocent Clinic awaited Joseph's transcripts, his prison porter job required him to clean a horrific blood spill. The clean-up process took 4½ hours, but the impact would last a lifetime. While cleaning the blood, he realized the true nature of his actions. Having turned into a man of faith, Joseph felt this was God's way of telling him to stop lying and to tell the truth. And he did. Joseph wrote the Innocence Clinic, parole board, and his judge, taking full responsibility for his actions. Unlike his father, who never got to work past his misguided anger and bad attitude, Joseph had grown out of his.

At 56 years of age, Joseph no longer has anger issues, and he conducts himself in a polite, humble manner. He now recognizes how his life experiences impacted him and his actions. In Joseph's own words, "I deeply and humbly apologize for taking a life that belonged to God, a person whom I had no right to harm or kill. If it were not enough that I took this person's life, I also lied about it. And I now know it was telling the truth that helped me become a man who could face his fate, putting away childhood pain and my childish ways." Joseph's conduct in prison, only three misconducts in 34 years, shows he has truly become a better person.



SOURCE:

Hastings Law J. Author manuscript; available in PMC 2017 Oct 30. Published in final edited form as: Hastings Law J. 2012 Aug; 63(6): 1469–1486. PMID: PMC5662008 / NIHMSID: NIHMS914346 / PMID: 29093605 The Relevance of Immaturities in the Juvenile Brain to Culpability and Rehabilitation / Beatriz Luna*

DID YOU KNOW...

The evidence for protracted maturation of brain systems that support executive behaviors indicates that the vulnerability to impulsive risk-taking behaviors in adolescence is transitional. As such, the propensity for impulsive acts or irresponsibility in adolescence is a mode of behavior that can be outgrown. Additionally, how an individual will develop, particularly with respect to responsible behavior in adulthood as brain resources increase, cannot be determined with certainty in adolescence. Lifelong sentencing that is based solely on a characterization of the individual at the time of adolescence—such as in life without parole—undermines the possibility that an adolescent may change with development into adulthood.

JERRY HUGHES #111092

A SPOTLIGHT ON CHILDHOOD TRAUMA & THE ELDERLY

Jerry Hughes was born in 1943 in Murphyboro, Illinois. His mother was 13 years old when she had her first child, and she gave birth to four more boys by the age of 19. The family stayed in a shotgun shack with no running water, no bathroom, and no electricity. They used an outhouse and fished water from a well. The family cooked their food on a wood and coal burning stove. Jerry's mother was illiterate, so when his father divorced her at the age of 19, the court declared her an unfit mother and granted his father full custody of the four boys, ages 1½, 3, 5 and 7 years old.

The father moved the family to Detroit, Michigan in 1945, and in 1947, he remarried a woman who had one child herself. With five children and two adults now living on welfare in the projects, Jerry's stepmother gave birth to four more children. Nine children and two adults were now crammed into a two-bedroom, rotten-infested apartment in the projects. The family was in serious trouble.

His father found a job in the auto industry in the 1940's. But Jerry's stepmother was illiterate and so were the children, even though the children did attend some public schooling early on. The family attempted to survive on government cheese and powdered milk, government cornbread, grits and peanut butter. All low standard foods by any standard of quality.

Eventually the family was forced to move to the Jefferies Housing Projects. At this point, things went from bad to worse. The children stole from clotheslines to acquire clothing. They shoplifted from markets to overcome hunger. They committed all sorts of crimes to survive, while simultaneously being exposed to pimps and hookers, thieves and murderers, and gangs and gang activity. There were lots of fights, shootings and stabbings. It was only a matter of time before Jerry and his siblings were sucked into the horrible world of hustling in the streets.



AGE-CRIME CURVE THEORY

The prevalence of lengthy sentences, and a lack of a meaningful mechanism through which an incarcerated individual may seek relief from one, means that a significant subpopulation of the federal prison population remains incarcerated well past the age most associated with criminal behavior. The "age-crime" curve theorizes that the risk of criminal behavior increases as an individual reaches late adolescence but drops steadily once an individual reaches adulthood.¹ Consistent with this theory, researchers have found an association between age and recidivism. A 2017 study from the U.S. Sentencing Commission (USSC) found that 13.4 percent of people released at the age of 65 or older recidivated, compared to 67.6 percent of people under 21 at the time of release.² Furthermore, the USSC found that the pattern of decreased risk of recidivism as age increased was "consistent across age groupings, and recidivism measured by rearrest, re-conviction, and re-incarceration declined as age increased."³

1. Rolf Loeber, David P. Farrington, and David Petechuk, "From Juvenile Delinquency to Young Adult Offending," National Institute of Justice, July 2013, <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/grants/242931.pdf>.

2. Kim Steven Hunt and Billy Easley II, "The Effects of Aging on Recidivism Among Federal Offenders," The United States Sentencing Commission, December 2017, https://www.uscc.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/research-and-publications/research-publications/2017/20171207_Recidivism-Age.pdf

3. Ibid.

Jerry was locked up in juvenile detention several times for stealing just about anything that could be stolen and eaten, or sold to buy food and clothing. By the age of 12, the detention center had become his second home. All of the kids from the Jefferies Projects called the detention center their second home.

Somehow, Jerry became the leader of a local gang, and he was off and running as a true criminal. He felt empowered and included for the first time in his life. He felt wanted and respected. At the age of 12, he was finally somebody. He began committing shootings, armed robberies, muggings and finally murder—which led him to prison for the first time.

Behind the walls of Jackson Prison, he was abused by the older convicts, mentally and physically. He was stabbed and forced to stab others in self-defense. He became a wild man. He was an emotional and psychological wreck. And he was released in this state.

Then, in July of 1975, Jerry was shot while trying to rob a bank. His co-defendant was killed and an innocent person was also killed in the process. A crime for which Jerry is deeply sorry. Jerry was rushed to U of M hospital for his gunshot wounds. There, he was told he may not survive the surgery, and it was at that moment that he told himself, that if he were to survive, he was going to change his ways and become a good man.

Surviving the surgery, Jerry awoke to find that the doctors had been forced to remove a section of his colon. He now needed to defecate in a plastic bag attached to him via a hose. Also, his arm had been placed in a cast. But back to prison he went, this time for the rest of his life, for the innocent life that was taken.

Months later, Jerry underwent another surgery to fix his insides and his arm. What surprised him most were all the religious people standing over his bed praying for him. For the first time in his life, he felt like someone actually cared about him. They gave him a King James Bible, and he started studying it and praying with them. Reverend Roberson, a pastor from Ypsilanti, started praying for and with him. He laid hands on Jerry, who had never had anyone lay hands on him, and called forth the power of the Lord. Jerry started to feel needed and loved. He was not accustomed to such kindness. He was used to abuse and rejection.

About five years later, Jerry started attending group counseling and began to learn about himself. He had lots to learn. A lifetime of bad stuff to unravel on the inside. But he did it. Enrolling in Jackson Community College, Jerry graduated with honors, earning a degree in Social Sciences. Two years later, he graduated from Spring Arbor University with honors.



Out of the four bank robbers who entered that bank in Ypsilanti to rob it in 1975, Jerry is the only one left alive. He is now 80 years old. His body is shot, but his mind and spiritual health remains sharp. He wishes he could turn back the clock and undo all the bad he has done, but he knows that is not possible. What he can do is try to be the best man that he can be every single day. Having only received three major misconducts in 49 years of incarceration, Jerry has followed through on his promise to become a quality person.



*For the first time in his life, he felt like someone actually cared about him.
Jerry started to feel needed and loved.
He was not accustomed to such kindness; he was used to abuse and rejection.*

KEITH RAPPUN #135856

A SPOTLIGHT ON REHABILITATION & THE ELDERLY

Keith Rappuhn is serving his 52nd year of incarceration for a first-degree murder conviction. He came to prison at the age of 22 and will be 74 years old this year (2024). Keith had no prior criminal background and his childhood was unremarkable. He grew up in a country setting with both parents, five brothers and two sisters. Three of his older brothers went to prison for violent crimes. Keith didn't have much discipline growing up, because his father was either working or out drinking. Although his father provided financially for the family, Keith doesn't recall much one-on-one time with his dad other than going fishing with him once or twice.



Keith quit school in his senior year to marry his pregnant girlfriend. He needed to work and landed a good job at General Motors. The couple soon bought a home. However, his marriage was less than ideal because Keith liked to drink and was unfaithful to his wife. He now knows that he wasn't a very good husband or father, even though he did love his family very much.

After a night of drinking at his mother's birthday party, Keith decided to stop at a friend's house to buy some marijuana. An argument ensued between the two. Keith pulled out a pocket knife and stabbed his friend multiple times. Scared and frightened, he fled without calling an ambulance or the authorities. Tragically, his friend died. Having no prior history with violence, Keith couldn't believe he had responded so violently. He was spiritually and mentally crushed, and plagued with guilt.

After going to prison, it did not take Keith long to realize that the system was only concerned about him staying in prison, not providing him with therapy. So he went to the library and started reading everything he could on psychology and human behavior. Although he is not an expert, Keith believes that he most likely experienced what is known as repressed aggression. Translation: he kept things bottled-up inside. A cocktail of alcohol, rage and his immature mindset allowed his repressed aggression to come boiling out in one violent act. Later, while attending college, Keith had the opportunity to speak with professors of psychology and sociology. They agreed with him that his findings were a very likely explanation.



Through Chance for Life, Keith learned a greater level of compassion for others and how to better serve his community, in prison or out. He truly has been "transformed" by the renewing of the mind, which is the Chance for Life motto.

For more information on Chance for Life, please go to www.chanceforlifeonline.org

Although not a clinical diagnosis, what the professors said motivated Keith to become a better person and to ensure that he would never commit another act of violence—even though he was sentenced to die in prison. Along the way, Keith completed over 40 self-help programs and/or classes, and he has earned vocational certifications in Food Technology, Building Trades and Building Maintenance. Additionally, he completed the Inside-Out college program, Restorative Justice, and a 12-year Siddah Yoga Meditation Program. Keith has been a Chance for Life core member for seven years. Also, Keith spent seven years training puppies for Leader Dog for the Blind. Working with these puppies required a great deal of work and patience, but he called it a true blessing that allowed him to give something back to the community. All of his accomplishments were achieved while working full-time prison jobs, mostly in tutor or clerical positions.



As a Chance for Life core member, Keith learned more about his dysfunctional way of thinking and how to change it. He received extensive training in Ethical Reasoning, Critical Thinking, Conflict Resolution, Meditation, Leadership Development, Communication Skills, and Substance Abuse Awareness. He also taught many of these same classes. Through Chance for Life, Keith learned a greater level of compassion for others and how to better serve his community, in prison or out. He truly has been “transformed” by the renewing of the mind, which is the Chance for Life motto.

During his half-century of incarceration, Keith has never received a misconduct for any kind of violence or drinking alcohol. His last major misconduct was 28 years ago. Keith takes full responsibility for the senseless murder he committed. He made terrible choices and failed to take the necessary steps to check his behavior. He deeply regrets his actions and only wishes that tragic day never occurred. He is sorry for the traumatizing his victim, for robbing his victim of life, and for robbing his victim’s family of a lifetime of happy memories. Keith’s victim was a kind and gentle person who did nothing wrong. Keith cannot stress how truly and deeply remorseful he is.

Driven by his shame and guilt, Keith spent many years learning why he committed the murder. He has gained significant insight into his crime, learned lots about himself, and learned how to properly deal with his anger. Most importantly, he knows how to pause, take a deep breath, and assess the situation without making any rash decisions. He has successfully practiced these methods for decades in the harsh prison environment.

Keith has worked hard and long to become a good person. ***He is no longer a threat to anyone, as demonstrated through 52 years of incarceration without an incident of violence.***

| | | |
|---|------------------------|---|
|  <p>\$48,000 PER INMATE</p> | DID YOU KNOW... |  <p>\$9,608 PER STUDENT</p> |
| <p><i>Last year it cost the State of Michigan about \$48,000, on average, to incarcerate each of its 32,600-plus prisoners, per the House Fiscal Agency.</i></p> <p><i>For each K-12 student for 2023-2024, the state only budgeted \$9,608.</i></p> <p>WHERE IS OUR MONEY BETTER SPENT???</p> | | |

SATISH MARISWAMY #310331

A SPOTLIGHT ON DEPORTABLE OFFENDERS

Satish Mariswamy, a citizen of India, came to the United States in 1999 on a H-1B VISA*. He earned a degree in Engineering as well as a Master in Business Administration from Bangalore University in India. Satish sought to put his skills to work at an American corporation, and he was quickly employed as a Project Engineer at Ford Motor Company in Plymouth, Michigan.

Less than six months after his arrival, Satish got into a dispute and took the life of Vijay Bulla, a family friend and a fellow Indian citizen. He was charged with open murder, convicted of first-degree murder, and sentenced to serve the remainder of his life in prison.

After work on October 13, 1999, Satish went to visit a friend in Ann Arbor, Naresh Vemure. Satish was waiting in his car for Naresh to arrive home. A neighbor, Mr. Bulla, who knew Satish, invited Satish to wait at his apartment until Naresh arrived home. Previously in India, Satish had been dating Mrs. Bulla's sister, but they had recently separated. The two spoke for a while, but the conversation quickly turned sour when Satish's break-up became the topic. Still emotional about the separation, Satish began to say rude and disparaging things about Mr. Bulla's marital life. Insults were hurled by both of them. In the midst of this exchange, a physical confrontation ensued and Mr. Bulla struck Satish on the head with a wrench. While wrestling, Satish was able to take possession of the wrench, and he began striking Mr. Bulla with it. Mr. Bulla grabbed a cable cord and dislodged the wrench from Satish. They both fell to the ground. Satish got atop of Mr. Bulla, took possession of the cord, and started strangling Mr. Bulla with it. Then, Satish retrieved a knife and fatally cut Mr. Bulla's neck.



Once Satish realized the gravity of what he had done, he panicked and tried to make it appear as if it was a robbery that had gone bad. To cover his crime, he scattered the dresser drawers in the bedroom, and he threw some jewelry in the streets. He then fled the scene. The next day Satish felt very uneasy and guilt-ridden, so he went to the Ann Arbor police and said that he was the one that discovered the body. Satish agreed to take a polygraph during which he confessed to what he had done.

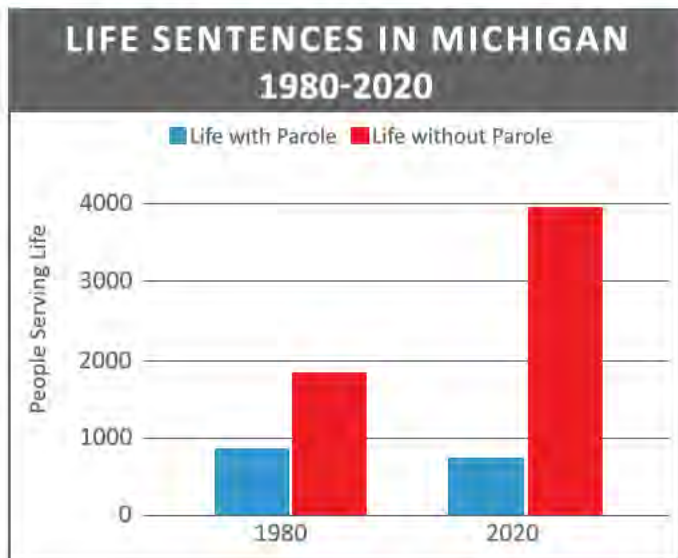


**The H-1B program allows companies and other employers in the United States to temporarily employ foreign workers in occupations that require the theoretical and practical application of a body of highly specialized knowledge and a bachelor's degree or higher in the specific specialty, or its equivalent.*

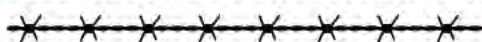
Prior to this incident, Satish had never been in trouble with the law, either in the United States or in India. He was lost over what to do. His lawyer advised him that the prosecutor was willing to offer a plea deal of second-degree murder with a minimum sentence of 13 years. Unaware of how the American legal system worked, Satish believed he was less culpable because the victim had struck him first with a weapon. Not understanding that having become the aggressor, and that under Michigan law, he was clearly guilty of first-degree murder, Satish elected to have a trial. He was subsequently found guilty of first-degree murder and sentenced to life without parole.

Consistent with the type of citizen Satish had been the first 29 years of his life, he went to prison and became a model prisoner. Satish has had only one major misconduct in 24-plus years of incarceration (which was the possession of a cell phone). Throughout his incarceration, he has sought to better his local community, both inside and outside prison. He has worked in numerous clerk jobs that only the most responsible inmates are allowed to perform. He has also worked as a G.E.D., Horticulture, and Building Trades tutor, sharing his skills and knowledge with his fellow inmates. For the past eight years, Satish has been working as a dog handler for Paws with a Cause and the Leader Dogs for the Blind. He has completed self-improvement programs such as Chance for Life and I-CAN (in-cell activity network) as well.

Satish was a model citizen prior to this tragic incident, and he has been a model prisoner since. Understanding the severity of his actions, Satish has agreed to be deported back to India upon his release. And in 2002, immigration issued a Final Order of Removal. Satish has family and friends in India who will provide him support should he be allowed to return to his homeland of India. **However, Michigan continues to imprison him almost 25 years later, at 54 years of age, and at a cost of approximately \$48,000 per year.**



Scan the QR code with the camera on your mobile device. You will see a link to click on that will direct you to a website where you can contact your Senator or Congress representatives about **SECOND LOOK LEGISLATION**.



IS THIS JUSTICE?

Satish was unaware of how the American legal system worked and based his decision to go to trial on the legal system in India. That decision cost him **Life in Prison without the possibility of parole.**

Satish has been a model prisoner for over 24 years. He has held prison jobs offered only to the most responsible and trusted inmates.

US Immigration issued a Final Order of Removal that would allow Satish to be deported back to India. His family has agreed to provide for his care once he returns to his homeland.

However, the State of Michigan continues to imprison him for almost 25 years at a cost to the taxpayers of \$48,000 per year.

THAT ADDS UP TO

\$1.2 MILLION DOLLARS!!!

→ \$1,200,000.00 ←

JOSHUA PUCKETT #250645

A SPOTLIGHT ON CHILDHOOD TRAUMA

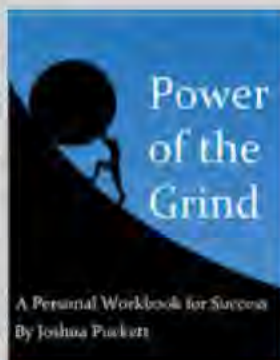
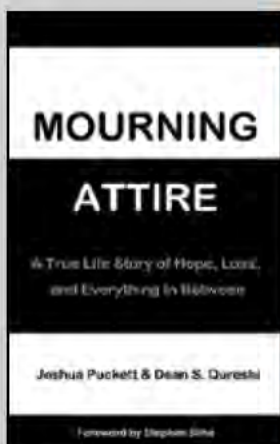
Joshua's abuse began at a very young age. He became the target of his biological mother's verbal and physical abuse. To compound matters a babysitter molested Joshua, even burning him with hot plastic to induce his compliance. At the age of 14, Joshua lost his father to a protracted battle with AIDS. Six months later, his two mothers were killed in a LGBTQ+ hate crime, right in their own driveway.

Over the next year, Joshua shut down and turned to the streets. Living on a friend's couch and selling drugs, Joshua began committing crime to support himself. The teens on the street became Joshua's family. He joined a gang for the companionship and acceptance the members provided. Two years later, some of Joshua's fellow gang members convinced him to participate in a fatal drive-by shooting. He was convicted and received a sentence of life without parole. Although not the trigger-man, Joshua is equally guilty under Michigan law.

At age 18, Joshua entered prison psychologically scared, and his behavior reflected the pain he lived. It took about 15 years before Joshua began to understand how his past had negatively influenced his decisions, and the person he had become. Disheartened over his past, he sought a better life for himself and those around him.



**BOOKS BY JOSHUA PUCKETT ARE
AVAILABLE FOR SALE ONLINE
THROUGH AMAZON.**



amazon.com

Joshua enrolled in Jackson Community College and earned three degrees. He has authored three books/programs that teach civic engagement, finding personal success, and even gang intervention. His desire to grow and help others culminated in Joshua becoming a peer mentor and founding two nonprofit organizations: The Adolescent Redemptive & Restorative Program and The Adolescent Redemption Project. Joshua even spent time training puppies for Leader Dogs for the Blind to help provide companionship and mobility to visually impaired people.

While trying to help others, Joshua is no longer the scared 18 year old who got lost on the streets. He has moved past his childhood trauma and become a reputable person having a positive impact on many people's lives. Dealt a different set of circumstances in life, Joshua could have avoided the tragedy that continues to haunt him and that he remained incarcerated for more than 29 years.

Joshua was recently given a **second chance** because of a change in the juvenile lifer law. Ironically, less than 12 months prior to being re-sentenced as a juvenile, the parole board and the Governor's office denied his commutation stating Joshua showed "no Merit" for release. After the judge re-sentenced Joshua, the same parole board immediately released him. The criminal justice system incarcerates people like Joshua, who pose no threat to society, simply because the parole board lacks authority to release them, unless a judge changes their sentence. This reality is why Michigan needs **SECOND LOOK SENTENCING**.



His desire to grow and help others culminated in Joshua becoming a peer mentor and founding two nonprofit organizations: The Adolescent Redemptive Project and The Adolescent Redemptive & Restorative Program

Second look sentencing is not a new concept. A second look sentencing provision was added into the American Legal Institute's Model Penal Code in 2008. This provision would allow the court to regain jurisdiction over a case for the purpose of considering re-sentencing after 15 years, with eligibility for reapplication every 10 years. In 2016, the Justice Roundtable offered a second look sentencing proposal as part of its "Roadmap for Criminal Justice" report. Under this proposal, individuals would be allowed to apply for re-sentencing after 10 years served, with eligibility for reapplication every two years thereafter.¹

¹ "A Roadmap for Criminal Justice Reform," the Justice Roundtable, January 2017, <https://justiceroundtable.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Roadmap-for-Criminal-Justice-Reform.pdf>.



THE ADOLESCENT
REDEMPITIVE & RESTORATIVE PROGRAM



The Adolescent Redemption Project

A Campaign For Mercy



Outside of the petitioning the governor's office, there's no current mechanism for re-examining people's sentences. House Bills 4556-60 would give those incarcerated a second chance by allowing them to petition their sentencing judge to take a second look at their case for a potential reduced sentence. Those who petition for a reduced sentence under the legislation would need to have served at least a decade, and would need to show they are no longer a risk to the community.

FOR MORE INFORMATION REGARDING HOUSE BILLS 4556-60, PLEASE GO TO:
<https://www.legislature.mi.gov/documents/2023-2024/billanalysis/House/pdf/2023-HLA-4556-CFF28ADA.pdf>
OR SEE PAGE 32 FOR MORE INFORMATION ON HOW TO CONTACT YOUR REPRESENTATIVES

CONCLUSION

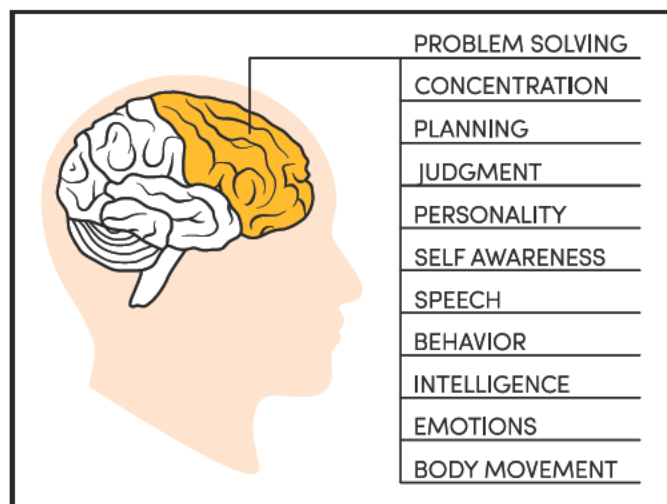
There are people who promote incorrect information about crime and criminals for personal reasons. These people often mis-state crime data and deploy scare tactics. Is it fair to highlight one person's horrific crime and generalize it to entire classes of criminals? For example, does everyone convicted of murder have the character of Charles Manson? This skewed information is a big factor in shaping what Michiganders believe about people who have committed a crime and about our prison system.

Based on the rhetoric promoted about crime and prisons, a majority of the public believes that releasing nonviolent offenders is the safest approach to prison reform. People believe that our parole board releases the safest prisoners. The public also believes people convicted of murder pose the greatest threat to society. After reading the profiles in this booklet, do they match the fears you hold about releasing some people who have committed the crime of murder?

Research shows that public beliefs are misplaced. The Notre Dame Law Review report on Violent-Crime Recidivism found that nonviolent offenders released before the age of 34 commit homicide more often than homicide offenders who serve at least five years and reach 55 years in age before release¹. (p. 1695-96). Over the course of many years, Michigan has paroled over 150 first-degree murderers who were juveniles at the time of their crime, and only four of them returned to prison—none for homicide. This data confirms historical data. In two separate decades-old memos, the Parole Board Chairman outlined how Michigan had released 286 first-degree murderers and only six of them violated parole. (SEE PAGE 33).

Over the past five years, Michigan's recidivism rate for all crime has been 26.57%². This means that 40 of the next 150 inmates released under our current parole practice will return to prison within 3 years. Given these statistics, paroling violent offenders is often more safe than paroling nonviolent offenders.

Many people believe the crime a person committed is indicative of that person's risk to society. The factors that best predict an inmate's level of risk to society include:



- **Age at the time of the offense**
- **Amount of time served**
- **Age upon release**
- **Level of education attained**
- **Institutional conduct**

AGE AT TIME OF OFFENSE: Young people commit a large portion of crime, particularly violent crime. In fact, almost 40% of people serving the longest prison sentences are incarcerated before the age of 25.² These statistics align with brain science. Brain research shows that people under 25 are still undergoing neuro-development in areas of the brain that control impulse and decision

making.³ As a result, people who commit crime at a young age change as the neuropathways in their brain fully develop.³ These changes significantly diminish future risk, even for people convicted of the most serious crimes such as murder.

AMOUNT OF TIME SERVED: The Notre Dame Law Review report found recidivism rates precipitously decline after a person serves 15 years in prison regardless of the offence the person committed.¹ (p. 1692). Over those 15 years, the brain fully develops in younger inmates, and older inmates tend to age out of crime.

AGE UPON RELEASE: Once a person reaches 55 years of age, the recidivism rate for them drops to 3% for any type of crime committed, with only 1% for committing a violent crime.¹ (p. 1688). As for age of release and homicide recidivism, 12% of people released for a murder or non-negligent homicide sentence before they turn age 24, are re-imprisoned for some new offense. Yet less than 5% for those who are released after 55 are re-imprisoned.¹

The safest inmates to parole are those who committed their crime before the age of 25 and serve at least 15 years, or those who are paroled after the age of 55. The recidivism rate for people who earn a bachelor's degree while in prison is 8.5-12.5 percent. Additionally, an inmate's prison conduct acts as an oversight mechanism. Whether brain re-development has been successfully achieved, 15 years in prison has satisfied rehabilitative needs, or the person reached 55 years of age and aged out of the crime, the person's prison conduct will verify his or her risk to re-offend. Statistics show that each Michigan prisoner receives, on average, 2.7 major misconducts per year. Offenders who have not received a major misconduct in 10 or more years demonstrate significant change and state their of rehabilitation.

Unfortunately, our parole board lacks the authority to release many of the inmates from the statistically safest categories. **Second Look Sentencing legislation** provides the solution. Through this legislation, the court would have the discretionary ability to re-sentence inmates from the safest recidivism categories. And the new sentence would give our parole board an opportunity to perform a risk assessment on those individuals.

Enacting **Second Look Sentencing** would provide inmates, such as those profiled in this booklet, a review mechanism. The people profiled in this booklet, and others in our prison system like them, committed their crime before the age of 25 and have now served 15 years in prison, or reached 55 years in age. Although these prisoners may possess prison misconduct histories—they have had no major misconducts in 15, 20, or more years—verifying they make the safest parole candidates.

Similar to Joshua Puckett or the other first-degree murderers who have successfully integrated into our society, the parole board and the criminal justice system claim the people like those profiled in this booklet pose a threat to society. ***Not because they actually pose a threat, but because the parole board lacks authority to release them.*** Were the people in these profiles given a different sentence, the court would commend them for their rehabilitative efforts and the parole board would declare them the safest choice for parole.

“
Were the people in these profiles given a different sentence, the court would commend them for their rehabilitative efforts and the parole board would declare them the safest choice for parole.
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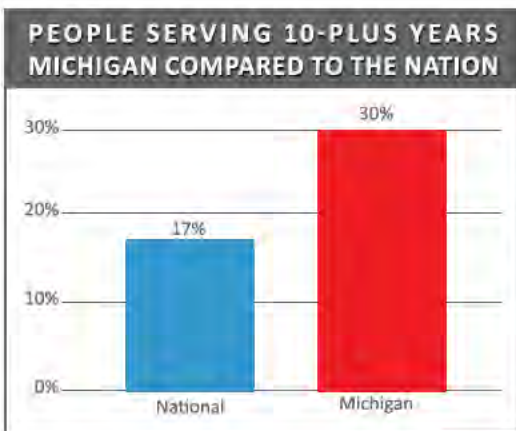
For the safety of communities across Michigan, the parole board should release those inmates who pose the least risk. Unfortunately, our current laws don't allow the parole board to do this. The result? Our parole system continues releasing people who pose a much greater risk to society than many of those who remain incarcerated. And we continue to spend \$48,000 per inmate each year to incarcerate some of our state's safest parole candidates. The cost can exceed that figure for elderly inmates.

For public safety reason, our state legislatures need to pass **SECOND LOOK SENTENCING** legislation. Please refer to **PAGE 30** for Instructions on how to obtain the contact information for your State Representative and State Senator.

¹Prescott, J.J., Pyle, B., and Starr, S.B. (2020). *Understanding Violent-Crime Recidivism*. *Notre Dame Law Review*, 95:4, 1643- 1698.

²Michigan Department of Corrections 2021 Statistical Report (Oct. 5, 2022) (D5); <http://www.michigan.gov/corrections>

³White Paper on the Science of Late Adolescence, A Guide for Judges, Attorneys, and Policy Makers, (Feb. 2, 2022).



The average criminal career lasts approximately 10 years,¹ with recidivism rates dropping considerably at around this period.² Yet, 30% of imprisoned Michiganders have already served 10 years and nearly one in 5 have already served 15 years. In comparison to other states, Michigan has a greater share of people who have served over ten years.³

¹ Kazemian, L. (2021). Pathways to desistance from crime among juveniles and adults: Applications to criminal justice policy and practice. *National Institute of Justice*; Blumstein, A., & Piquero, A. (2007). Restore rationality to sentencing policy. *Criminology & Public Policy*, 6(4), 679-687. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1745-9133.2007.00463.x>; Kazemian, L., & Farrington, D. P. (2018). Advancing knowledge about residual criminal careers: A follow-up to age 56 from the Cambridge Study in Delinquent Development. *Journal of Criminal Justice*, 57, 1-10. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jcrimjus.2018.03.001>; Piquero, A., Hawkins, J., & Kazemian, L. (2012). Criminal career patterns. In R. Loeber & D. P. Farrington (Eds.), *From juvenile delinquency to adult crime: Criminal careers, justice policy, and prevention* (pp.14-46). Oxford University Press.

² Antenagelli, L., & Durose, M.R. (2021). Recidivism of prisoners released in 24 states in 2008: A 10-year follow-up period (2008-2018). *Bureau of Justice Statistics*.

³ A 45-state average of states reveals that 17% of incarcerated people have served over 10 years. See; Ghandnoosh, N. & Nellis, A. (2022). How many people are spending over a decade in prison? *The Sentencing Project*. Data Sources: United States. Bureau of Justice Statistics. *National Corrections Reporting Program, 1991-2019: Selected Variables*. Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research [distributor], 2021-07-15; Michigan Department of Corrections.



SLS (SECOND LOOK SENTENCING) proclaims I want something better for Michigan. Scientific research shows us that people change. They mature. They age out of criminality and grow out of the mistakes of youth that lead many people to prison. They cultivate new tools for dealing with conflict, even while living in an often violent place, prison. The majority of people serving life and long sentences are statistically proven to not be a threat to public safety. Rather, these same people will either be elderly neighbors dedicated to growing old in peace, or these individuals can serve as positive influences whose lived experience can guide our communities in a better and more peaceful direction.

Michigan needs to radically address the root causes of violence and harms in our communities: addressing root causes of violence and harm is a more effective and lasting way to end those cycles in our communities. Tax-payer's dollars wasted on long sentences that don't deter crime and could be better invested in our communities through community policing and crime prevention, quality education and job training programs, mental health and substance misuse treatment, quality housing, and more.

Locking people away in prison for a long time does not stop violence in our communities or deter crime. According to a Department of Justice fact sheet, "prison sentences (particularly long sentences) are unlikely to deter future crime," and "Laws and policies designed to deter crime by focusing mainly on increasing the severity of punishment are ineffective partly because criminals know little about the sanctions for specific crimes."

Excerpt from Jamie Meade Blog; *Opinion: Second Look Sentencing – Smart, Fiscally-Responsible, and Evidence-Based Criminal Justice Reform*, first published July 9 2023 *Michigan Lifer's Report Newsletter June 2023 Issue*

SECOND LOOK SENTENCING

SECOND LOOK SENTENCING WOULD BRING RELIEF TO THOSE STILL SERVING LENGTHY, UNJUST, AND INEFFECTIVE SENTENCES IN THE PRISON SYSTEM.

HOW IT WORKS:

- Step #1: After the inmate spends 10 years in prison, his/her representative can ask the court to take a second look at the sentence.
 - Step #2: The prosecutor and the judge review the inmate's entire prison record, good and bad, and any other relevant information. The judge will then decide if a lesser sentence is warranted based upon the inmate's rehabilitation.
 - Step #3: If the judge grants a new sentence, the inmate is not automatically released. The inmate must then go before the parole board, who will determine whether release is appropriate. If paroled, the inmate will be placed on supervised release by the MDOC.
-

PUBLIC SAFETY FACTS:

- Second Look Legislation is supported by multiple studies on recidivism and designed to release only the safest inmates. For instance, The Notre Dame study on violent crime and recidivism found that recidivism drops dramatically after 15 years of incarceration for people who have committed any type of crime.
 - According to the 2021 MDOC Statistical Report, the 5-year average recidivism rate is currently at 26.5%. Releasing inmates from much lower recidivism groups (e.g. inmates 55+ years old or who served 15+ years, inmates with higher education, or with few misconducts) means safer communities across Michigan.
 - At a cost of approximately \$48,000/year to house each inmate, the MDOC requires a \$2.1 billion budget and uses 19% of our general fund. The Michigan cost per inmate is 5x the amount spent on educating each K-12 student. Releasing inmates from the lowest recidivism groups will safely reduce the MDOC budget and leave more money for education.
 - In Michigan, people who never physically harmed anyone (called aiders and abettors) can receive the same and even greater sentences than the actual perpetrator. This often means aiders and abettors will receive mandatory life or lengthy sentences without ever physically harming anyone.
 - Michigan has released approximately 150 juveniles convicted of first-degree murder (juvenile lifers) after decades of incarceration. Less than 5 out of the 150 have returned to prison. By comparison—given the 26.5% recidivism rate of the current parole process—40 out of the next 150 people released will return to prison.
-



SHOW YOUR SUPPORT FOR THIS PUBLIC SAFETY INITIATIVE! GO TO WWW.SENTENCINGPROJECT.ORG TO FIND OUT HOW YOU CAN HELP.

The Sentencing Project advocates for effective and humane responses to crime that minimize imprisonment and criminalization of youth and adults by promoting racial, ethnic, economic, and gender justice.

STEPS TO LOCATE YOUR STATE LEGISLATURE

1. Go to: <https://www.legislature.mi.gov/>
2. The screen to the below will appear.
3. Click on either "Find your Senator" or "Find your Representative" ★
4. You will be directed to a screen that will give you options on how to find the person you need to contact.
5. From there you will have the ability to write to your representative(s) asking them to support Second Look Sentencing.
6. To the right is a sample script you can use when contacting.



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| Bill | Date | Action |
|---------|--------|--|
| SB 617 | May. 9 | REPORTED FAVORABLY WITHOUT AMENDMENT |
| SB 617 | May. 9 | REFERRED TO COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE |
| SB 618 | May. 9 | REPORTED FAVORABLY WITH SUBSTITUTE (S-1) |
| SB 618 | May. 9 | REFERRED TO COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE WITH SUBSTITUTE (S-1) |
| SB 688 | May. 9 | REPORTED FAVORABLY WITH SUBSTITUTE (S-2) |
| SB 688 | May. 9 | REFERRED TO COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE WITH SUBSTITUTE (S-2) |
| HB 4675 | May. 8 | read a second time |



SCAN THE QR CODE
with the camera on your mobile device. You will see a link to click on that will direct you to a website where you can contact your Senator or Congress representatives.

USE OUR SAMPLE SCRIPT WHEN EMAILING YOUR REPS!



SAMPLE EMAIL TO LEGISLATORS

For public safety reasons, I am asking that you vote to pass Second Look Sentencing legislation. Our parole board lacks the authority to parole many people who no longer pose a risk to society. In fact, they often parole many people who pose a much greater risk to society than those who remain in prison. Second Look Sentencing would solve this problem and save our state a significant amount of money.

APPENDIX

Over the course of many years, Michigan has paroled over 150 first-degree murderers who were juveniles at the time of their crime, and only four of them returned to prison—none for homicide. This data confirms historical data. In two separate decades-old memos, the Parole Board Chairman outlined how Michigan had released 286 first-degree murderers and only six of them violated parole.

Director Harrison Memo to Governor Romney

held

October 5, 1964

Personal

Honorable George Romney
Governor of Michigan
Executive Office
Lansing, Michigan

Dear Governor Romney:

Recently I discussed the murder first degree program with Walt DeVries. I expressed some concern about its present state. Walt thought I should forward my comments to you; so at his suggestion, I make certain observations about this program.

As you know, the Parole Board carefully screens murder first degree cases. All cases are reviewed annually, and the Board will devote almost two weeks to the thorough review of these. Every murder first degree case is interviewed after service of ten calendar years, but cases are not considered for processing until fifteen calendar years has been served. Presently, there are 244 cases given this annual review.

The program has been extremely successful. Lifers not only make the best inmates, but also the best prospects for rehabilitation and successful adjustment in the community. Since 1938 we have had only six parole violators out of 286 paroles. Michigan's high rate of success is not unique, but comparable to the experience of other jurisdictions.

The Parole Board has expressed to me its concern over the reaction to their recommendations. This does not mean that the Board feels that the Executive Office must always agree, but prior to 1963 only four cases were denied by the Governor, but during the past 20 months nine have been turned down. Further, there is a considerable backlog of these cases in the Executive Office. I share the concern since the commutation process has considerable impact on the inmate body. Denial has a negative effect on inmate morale and also on the employees from the custodial officer up through the Parole Board - all responsible for a favorable recommendation for commutation to you. A long delay in processing commutation cases

Director Harrison Memo to Governor Romney

Page 2
Honorable George Romney

October 5, 1964

creates much anxiety on the part of the offender and his family. Quite often, community programs which have been tentatively arranged disappear if too much time elapses during the processing of the case.

The Board feels that it is quite conservative and careful in screening cases. Of course, they point to their success rate to justify their decisions. The Board has discussed with me the possibility of further guidance from the Executive Office. The Board's function is, of course, advisory to you, but it would rather not submit cases which have no chance of going. Is it possible to work out more specific guidelines for the Board so that there would be a closer agreement on what type of case would receive favorable action?

I respectfully submit this matter for your consideration.

Respectfully yours,

DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

Gus Harrison, Director

GH:jm

cc: Mr. Walter DeVries

Parole Board Chair Memo to MDOC Director Gus Harrison

October 1, 1964

MEMORANDUM

To: Director Gus Harrison

From: Leonard R. McConnell

Subject: Pertinent facts about the Murder First Degree Program, with particular reference to the current administration

Purpose: This is prepared at Director Harrison's request to serve as a basis for writing a letter to the Governor explaining our Murder First Degree Program.

I - Procedure

The Michigan Parole Board employs a very careful screening procedure as applied to murder first degree cases. We have an annual review procedure whereby all five Board members sit down once a year and devote about two weeks exclusively to the review of murder first degree cases. We do not consider for processing such cases until after their 15th year. However, under our current program we do interview them in their 10th year and receive annual reports every year thereafter. This means then that generally we have reviewed many times on an annual basis all cases before they are set up for the public hearing and recommendation to the Governor. As a rule we require unanimous Board approval for favorable action. There are currently 244 cases under our annual review program (31 of these are at Ionia State Hospital).

II - Success of the Program

Our murder first degree program is most successful. We have a far greater rate of success than is true of any other category of offenders. Since 1938 we have had six violators (mostly technical) out of about 286 paroles. Our experience and the high rate of success in Michigan is not unique, since other jurisdictions report similar success. In brief, this means that all murder first degree cases paroled represent excellent risks.

III - Time Served

The average period of time served by our murder first degree cases is about 25 years. More recently the Board has

Parole Board Chair Memo to MDOC Director Gus Harrison

-2-

released somewhat sooner. Our feeling has been that men should be released while they are still productive and that it is more humane to do so. However, it is still our feeling that we should not consider murder first degree cases prior to the service of 15 years, and generally we require something beyond that.

IV - Executive Response to Parole Board Recommendations

Over the past 15 years the Executive Office has generally accepted our recommendations and acted favorably. There were two denials during the Williams' administration and two during Governor Swainson's administration. Governor Romney has denied the following:

1963

John Lewis, A-46140-J
John Abbatoy, A-57205-J
Gordon N. Rolland, A-44428-M

1964

Sanford Callier, A-75022-J
Isaiah Perry, A-67015-J
Al. J. Meyers, A-64503-J
Wallace A. Wilson, A-64796-J
Richard E. Gorman, 67278-C
LeRoy Reynolds, B-43137-J

V - Number of Commutations

During the early years of the Board's participation in the commutation program a very conservative number were processed. However, since 1959 about 25 cases have been commuted annually. In 1963 Governor Romney commuted 24 - thus far this year there have been 10 commuted. There are 11 cases pending in the Governor's office and four being typed up to send over.

VI - Significance of the Commutation Program to the Total Corrections Program

Since murderers serve long periods of time in prison, they become quite well-known by all of the personnel and the inmates. Also they generally compile very good records. Because this is true, they wield tremendous influence on other inmates and on Corrections generally. Therefore, any action taken regarding their commutation has considerable impact on the rest of the inmate body. A denial generally has a very negative effect on inmate morale and the image of Corrections. Also, frequent denials make it rather difficult for the Parole Board to proceed in an orderly fashion. In the past, a public hearing and recommendation from the Board has generally meant favorable action. Further, a reasonably quick response to a Parole Board's recommendation is helpful, since a long delay creates much anxiety on the part of the offender involved and all other interested parties.

Parole Board Chair Memo to MDOC
Director Gus Harrison

-3-

SUMMARY: The Board employs a very conservative and careful screening policy regarding murder first degree cases and our success rate, we feel, justifies and supports our decisions. The trend in dealing with offenders is more humanitarian; accordingly, we feel our handling of murder first degree cases is consistent with the public interest. If more guidance from the Governor's Office is possible, the Parole Board would welcome it, since more danger results from denial than if such cases were not even submitted. Since the Board views its function in Executive Clemency as largely advisory, we are eager for a closer liaison in such matters. Anything we can do to work toward this is desirable.

FINAL THOUGHTS

WHAT IS JUSTICE? I'm reminded of a 1970's television show, Baretta, where the main character, a cop, had a famous line he said in each show: "Don't do the crime if you can't do the time." That philosophy sounded reasonable to me. In order to maintain civil order and community safety, crimes must have consequences, especially serious crimes such as murder. In Michigan, the penalty for first-degree murder, is a mandatory Life Without the Possibility of Parole (LWOP).

Daily we are inundated with, and frightened by, the news media, Court TV, true and fictional crime shows. We're not safe anywhere. Lock 'em up and throw away the key! But is it that black and white? A one-size fits all punishment? Extenuating circumstances don't matter?

It wasn't until I read the following stories that I came to understand that the state of Michigan needs to reconsider Life without the Possibility of Parole as a mandatory sentence. There are incarcerated murderers and career criminals, that if were released, would re-offend again, I've no doubt of that. However, if you have read the stories in this booklet, you will have found the majority of the crimes committed by these individuals were done while their brains were still developing. We've presented information to you documenting studies that indicate the brain is not fully developed before age 26, particularly in the area of decision-making. But that information does not seem to be taken into account

It wasn't until I was asked to typeset and layout this booklet that I became aware that the MDOC does not take into consideration any extenuating circumstances for those convicted of first-degree murder. The more I read, the more empathy I had for the people highlighted in this booklet, and the more frustrated I became with the Michigan justice system. Read their stories. These people are not just ID Numbers in the prison system. They are sons and daughters, fathers and mothers, sisters and brothers to someone. They have hopes and dreams of one day being able to be with their families again.

It doesn't matter in Michigan whether you pulled the trigger, drove the get-away car, provided the weapon, your sentence is still Life Without the Possibility of Parole. In Jamie Meade's case you will find that the trigger-man who actually murdered the victim, has been released from prison, but Jamie, his accomplice, who did not do the actual killing is doing life. In Jamie's case the shooter was convicted of second-degree murder. That trigger-man has been since released, while Jamie is spending the rest of his life in prison. Is that justice? While the revolving door of repeat criminals continues to lock 'em up and let 'em out, these "Lifers" that are no longer a threat of any kind to society, sit in their cells, with little hope of having a SECOND LOOK.

Thank you for taking the time to read these compelling stories. Our hope is that these stories will move you to take action and contact the people who represent us in Michigan government - the ones who can make that happen. We ask that when you are finished with this booklet to please pass it on so we can help educate the voters of Michigan how their tax dollars are being used for the prison system. You can also go to the National Lifers of America website (www.nationallifersofamerica.org) for more information on how you can help us bring to light the injustice of a broken system.

DISCLAIMER

The National Lifers of America, Inc. (NLA) is not responsible for the production of this booklet, nor the selection of individuals featured within.

NLA Local Chapter1012 Executive Board selected the individuals that would be featured in this booklet and is responsible for the publishing of this booklet.

According to Michigan Representative Kara Hope (*D - Holt*)
of the Michigan House Criminal Justice Committee,



**the state of Michigan spends about
\$48,000 a year per prisoner**

and holds over 32,000 prisoners in the state. Of those 32,000, about
32% have served a decade or more of a sentence, and many of those incarcerated in
Michigan's prisons are serving sentences that are not representative of current
sensibilities about length of punishment. **People in prison are growing older,
*and the cost of medical care for elderly continues to rise.***



**EACH MORNING'S DAWN
A PROMISE ANEW
OF CHANCES FOR CHANGE
FOR STARTING TRUE
THOUGH TODAY I'M BOUND
IN SHADOWS CAST
I HOLD ONTO HOPE
FOR FREEDOM AT LAST**



SECOND LOOK

SENTENCING

“FOR TO BE FREE IS NOT MERELY TO CAST OFF ONE'S CHAINS,
BUT TO LIVE IN A WAY THAT RESPECTS AND ENHANCES THE FREEDOM OF OTHERS.”

- NELSON MANDELA