

March 21st, 2021

Dear Senate Committee,

I am writing in support of Senate Bill 191. When I was seventeen I was sentenced to life with the possibility of parole after twenty-five years for a horrendous murder, so this bill will not affect me. However, I am very compassionate towards people I've met here that have done good things with their time. I spent my first seven years in Maclaren Youth Correctional Facility so I know what an effective rehabilitative environment looks like - and adult prisons don't really have one. Maclaren is an environment focused on restorative justice so they make rehabilitation easy - not to mention a youth's brain is more malleable to positive change. Once I finished the plethora of treatment programs in Maclaren and received more privileges, they then helped solidify my pro-social character by granting me the opportunity to give back by mentoring younger youth. The Department of Corrections has much less programming and is more punitive and dangerous so it's harder for one to improve themselves. That being said, when I witness an adult offender exerting significant efforts to improve themselves despite that lack of restorative programming, it's obvious to me that they are very serious about rehabilitation. When an environment isn't conducive to one's success but that person is courageous enough to confront despair and improve their character for their family, children, victims, and their own sake, that is borderline heroic behavior. They are harnessing an inherent human goodness, empathic capacity, and depth of conscience inside of them against the chaos of their environment. In my opinion, that type of person has something valuable they must share with their community, possibly through mentoring the next generation of at-risk youth, and would be a shame not to utilize them as a community resource. Perhaps

it would be a good idea to let this type of person out early with certain conditions. Their growth should not be wasted in doing excess prison time and they should be utilized for community service - similarly to what Maclaren did for me when I started mentoring.

For the reasons above, I would recommend that my state senators vote yes on senate Bill 191. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

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