



Board of Commissioners of Cook County

118 North Clark Street
Chicago, IL

Legislation Text

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PROPOSED RESOLUTION

A RESOLUTION SUPPORTING THE STATE OF ILLINOIS HOUSE BILL 4364 SENATE BILL 3228 TO OFFER OPPORTUNITY FOR JUVENILE OFFENDERS SERVING LIFE SENTENCES THE CHANCE FOR PAROLE

WHEREAS, The U.S. Supreme Court ruled six years ago that sentencing schemes that require life sentences with no hope of parole for crimes committed by juveniles violated the U.S. Constitution; and,

WHEREAS, on May 6, 2018, the Injustice Project, in partnership with the Chicago Sun-Times, published an article stating that in Illinois more than 160 prisoners are serving life sentences for crimes they committed as juveniles, with virtually no hope of parole or early release under current law; and,

WHEREAS, Using Illinois Department of Corrections data, Injustice Watch examined the number of prisoners serving 50 or more years in prison who were taken into custody before their 18th birthday; and,

WHEREAS, Because Illinois almost entirely abolished parole in 1978, the 167 juvenile offenders do not get the same chance to show rehabilitation and change that they might get in other states. The only juvenile offenders with parole opportunities are the aging handful who were convicted before the law changed four decades ago; and,

WHEREAS, Courts across the country varied standards on what length of a prison term can legally be considered a life sentence, and whether and when they should be eligible for parole; and,

WHEREAS, At least 13 other states and Washington, D.C., have passed laws giving young offenders a chance to ask for parole release or a sentence reduction after first serving as few as 12 and as many as 35 years in prison, depending on the state and severity of the crime; and,

WHEREAS, The Illinois Senate Criminal Law Committee last month sent to the full Senate a bill that would permit inmates who committed crimes before the age of 21 the periodic chance to ask for parole, after first serving 10 years for lesser crimes and 20 years for first-degree murder or aggravated sexual assault; and,

WHEREAS, Research indicates that incarceration has a jarring effect on life expectancy, a study by Vanderbilt University Professor Evelyn Patterson found each year of incarceration likely reduces a prisoner's life expectancy by two years.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Cook County Board of Commissioners do hereby support and encourage the 100th General Assembly of the State of Illinois in the passage of ~~House Bill 4364~~ Senate Bill 3228.