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**Testimony in Support of SB 256  
Regards Sentencing Offenders Under 18 When Committed Offense  
House Criminal Justice Committee**

Dear Chairman Lang, Vice Chair Plummer, Ranking Member Leland, and members of the Criminal Justice Committee:

My name is Eugenia Wade. I live in Xenia, Ohio, and I am the mother of three sons. One of my sons has been incarcerated since 2005. He was 16 years old at the time of his crime.

I remember the day that he was sentenced. I walked home from the courthouse, and I was in such shock that I couldn't fully comprehend what had happened. When I got home, my brother told me that my son would spend the rest of his life in prison. I wish I knew back then what I know now, because I would have made sure that none of this would have happened. My son was misguided by an older co-defendant twice his age. This man had just gotten out of prison two weeks prior to the crime. He used my son and lead him astray. I hurt for the family who lost their son because of my son's actions. I hurt so very badly for them. I, too, have lost a son to violent crime and can imagine all too well what pain they must have gone through.

Our family fell apart when my son went to prison. I separated from my boys' father and watched my other sons unable to deal with the hurt and pain of losing their brother to the prison system. Since I didn't have a car, visiting my son regularly has never really been an option for me. I visited him many times when he was still in the county jail, but since he was sent to prison thirteen years ago, I haven't been able to see him a lot. I cannot even begin to tell you how much I miss my son.

My son is now 32 years old, and he has completely changed his life for the better in prison. He got his G.E.D., is participating in all kinds of programs, and is in a committed relationship with a young woman who has been by his side for close to a decade. I may be biased, because he is my son, but I truly believe he deserves a parole hearing before he's in his seventies. SB 256 would allow my son to go in front of the parole board in nine years from now. As others have said, SB 256 would not automatically release my son. Rather, it would give him a chance to prove that he is a different person now than he was 15 years ago. I would love to see this bill become law not only for my son and his fiancée, but also for myself. If the law does not change, I will not be alive when my son comes home. It is very hard for me to think about that. I want nothing more than to hug my son again outside those prison walls.

I beg you to pass SB 256 and give my son hope to come home to his family one day. Thank you so much for reading my testimony.