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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 William Tony Campbell, I live in Cincinnati, Ohio, and I was recently released from prison, after having been acquitted of vehicular homicide. I spent more than a decade of my life in prison. I am writing this testimony on behalf of Charles "Keith" Wampler.

I met Keith when I was incarcerated at London Correctional Institution. We were able to get to know each other behind bars for several years. Keith has been incarcerated since 1982. He was a teenager when he was told that he was beyond hope. Very quickly, we became friends in prison. Keith is one of the kindest and most caring individuals you will ever meet. He will give you the shirt off of his back to make sure you are alright. He's the kind of guy that would do just about anything for anybody. If I or anyone else around him was in need (of food or hygiene products), he would always do what he could to help out, and never ask for anything in return.

Keith and I spent a lot of time at the prison's law library. We worked on both our cases and helped others prepare their judicial release paperwork and things of that nature. I also studied Keith's case thoroughly, and I am convinced that he was wrongfully convicted. But even if you choose not to believe that, he will have been incarcerated for 39 years in February of 2021. It's hard for me to imagine that he is just not getting the chance that he deserves. I can't think of anyone who deserves their freedom more than Keith. I firmly believe that Keith would prove to be an asset to society.

SB 256 would give Keith and so many others like him hope that he would be able to come home one of these days. A lot of juvenile lifers have been judged for their entire lives for a single bad night. This is not at all to minimize the crimes that some teenagers have committed, but to serve as a reminder that they can and do change.

Thank you very much for considering my testimony. I urge you strongly to vote yes on SB 256.

Sincerely, William Tony Campbell