

To Chairman Lang, Vice-Chair Plummer, Ranking Member Leland and members of The House Criminal Justice Committee. My name is Jason Holmes #A295-246. Since 1994, at the age of 16, I have been a prisoner in the ODRC. With this opportunity I hope to give positive, supportive energy to Senate Bill 256. If not for proactive Bills such as this, my first parole review date by the Ohio APA would be in the year 2041 at the age 63! I am not the primary offender in my capitol offense and wasn't present when it took place. From my observance SB 256 it isn't just something proposed as a means to end litigation about a sore subject that was corrected for "fairness" under the law. It is also a necessary correction in Ohio legally, following the lead of the U.S. Supreme Court's determination in legal matters concerning cruel and unusual punishment of juvenile offender, over sentenced juvenile offenders like myself, and the rehabilitation of young adult offenders. Every man and woman with an opinion has given their say to what is fair in regards to juvenile justice and the rehabilitation of mentally broken young people. So much so that the actual laws governing teens were asked to be reviewed and reconsidered due to the findings of scientific studies, statistical analysis and the conscious minds in society that refused to toss away some of us lost souls because of the acts we committed in the larvae state of our brains.

The decision to rethink what is truly justified as enough punishment for juvenile offenders, with the victim's also taken into consideration, and the goal of rehabilitating those redeemable enough to give a second chance to, every State was asked to find their own solution to this dilemma. In Ohio, we have finally proposed something that may be effective in making us compliant with our nation's government/courts, the People, and offenders. Senate Bill 256 gives opportunity to the victims of crime time do resolve issues they may have with perpetrators by providing a realistic timeline to observe behaviors and prepare themselves for realistic healing. The Bill doesn't simply free offenders because they've served time but we have to prove maturity and growth to be freed at all; we'd just be seen sooner. The Parole Board will still have the power to weigh facts, records and accomplishments before approving a juvenile offender's release back into society. Prisoners are given hope and motivation to raise their level of maturity, discipline and education to receive a realistic review from the Parole Authority and hopefully all of us will consciously make the right decisions to mold ourselves into better men so we can be free. And Ohio will finally have a means to end litigation surrounding the dilemma of what is too much time for a punishment and learn whom of us juvenile offenders is actually rehabilitated as is the goal of the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation & Corrections.

Punishment and rehabilitation are similar but not the same. Punishment can continue as long as there are people willing to provide reasons for its justification; and as long as there is a victim, there will always be a reason for some people to be punished. There will always be a victim to remember whether the offender is free to live in society or in prison. If that prisoner is successfully proven (as much as humanly possible) to be rehabilitated and the punishment of living in confines is deemed sufficient enough by the Authorities a realistic chance at being a productive member of society is possible. A properly observed and rehabilitated prisoner can also preserve the memory of his or her victim(s). Their personal successful growth into adulthood they achieve throughout the years of rehab and confinement can be a way of showing the victim's loved ones they are truly apologetic for their acts in their teenage years. But that growth cannot be seen in society, where it matters mostly, if we are left to rot in cells until old age. The chance to earn freedom would be given through this new Senate Bill. I hope to be an example for future would-be offenders in demonstrating the growth I have experienced. Please approve this new Bill and begin a new era in Rehabilitation for Ohio's lost youth. Thank you for your time and careful consideration.