



Life Without Parole

More than one out of ten prisoners in Massachusetts is serving a Life Without Parole sentence (LWOP). Denying prisoners the opportunity to ever apply for parole not only robs them of hope and denies their capacity to rehabilitate, it wastes public resources and does little to promote public safety. **An Act to Reduce Mass. Incarceration** would allow all people serving life sentences the opportunity for a parole hearing after serving 25 years, and it would apply retroactively so that it would impact currently incarcerated people.

An Act to Reduce Mass. Incarceration (H. 3358, Rep. Livingstone, S. 826,
Sen. Boncore)

2019-2020 legislative session

Paying for the permanent incarceration of so many aging prisoners means diverting resources away from programs for treatment, preschool, training, behavior intervention, reentry, and others.

As a result of long sentences like life without parole our prison population is aging. Incarcerated men over the age of 60 increased by 41% between 2010 and 2018, while the prison population declined by 18%. If these trends continue then by 2024, men over 60 will account for 18% of the total male population in DOC.

It is two to three times more expensive to house an elderly prisoner than an average prisoner in the general population. The prison system is not designed or equipped to properly care for the elderly, sick, and dying.

LWOP does not further any pecuniary goals.

Not a deterrent. It is the certainty, not the severity, of punishment that actually deters criminal activity.

Not rehabilitative. Permanent incarceration without parole gives up on a person's ability to ever rehabilitate.

Not retributive. Life without parole does not make society better and is a contradiction to the notion of restorative justice.

In general, **one's proclivity to commit crime, including murder, is highly age-dependent.** The peak age is in one's early to mid-twenties, and continues to decline as one ages. It makes little sense to mandate that a person in their twenties must stay in prison for the rest of their life without a chance to later determine if they still pose a threat to public safety. Incarcerating people who pose no threat is a waste of resources.

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