

PUBLIC COMMENTS

HB 686

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON JUVENILE JUSTICE & FAMILY ISSUES

Hearing Date: March 8, 2021 10:00 AM

Rhonda Ramsour

Self Medicare Claims supervisor

McKinney, TX

Please consider this bill.

My son was convicted of murder before the age of 18. He is now serving a 40 year sentence at the McConnell unit. As many understand, the male brain does not fully develop before 25 years old. I am not stating guilt or innocence but the length of the sentence for someone so young should be considered when sentence is done.

Taylor Gibson

Self

Grand Prairie, TX

Please support this bill!

Brenda Sontag

Myself and my Son

New Braunfels, TX

I support this bill because our children are sentenced severely as children. They have grown into intelligent, caring men and women who are no longer the children of their past. Their brain has fully developed and they have full mental capacity to understand the difference between right and wrong, something they did not have as teenagers. They deserve a chance to experience life on this side of the wall, jobs, bank accounts, driving and I pray even happiness if they can get past PTSD

Karina Angulo Solis

Self

Big Spring, TX

Please consider to pass this bill. Every incarcerated person deserves a second chance specifically those who when to prison when they were young at the age of 18 years. These men and women got long sentences most if their life's were inside those prisons, they deserve to have a family, to change their life's, go back to school and live their lives like a normal person. God Bless you

Pamela Sweet

pamela sweet

Bonham, TX

Children are not capable of adult decisions. They don't recognize danger. In my belief law of parties should not cost a first offender their entire life. Nor place them in an adult prison. They should be given an opportunity to be a productive member of society. Thanks for supporting this bill

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Deanna Luprete
Epicenter Initiative
Somerville, TX

I support HB686 and have been in support since 2017. This bill would change the lives of many by making it possible to reunite Texas families that lost their children to extreme sentencing practiced in the 90's. This niche population within TDCJ are rehabilitated, they are worthy of redemption. Please allow a second look at 20 years while they're young enough to reintegrate into society, obtain meaningful employment, start a family, and give back to the community. We know this population does not reoffend so there is no need to doubt the safety of the public. How do I know this? I work with this niche population that we lovingly call Second Lookers. I'm a volunteer chaplain in TDCJ. Additionally, I run a reentry program created for Second Lookers. I minister to the needs of their families daily. The organization I founded in 2016 exists to care for justice involved youth serving extreme sentences, because extreme sentences aren't minor. Do justice, love mercy, walk humbly. Micah 6:8

Heather Crawley
Self
Houston, TX

I support this bil

Shauna Reyes
Self - director of operations
Spring, TX

I support this bill and believe children deserve the opportunity to prove their rehabilitated at 20 years instead of 30 or 40.

Gabriela Reyes
Gabriela Reyes
Houston, TX

Please 2nd chance for this bill to pass.

shelly Grayson
self
Irving, TX

Need a change. please pass this bill to help the youth/offenders get out prison.

Shameka Thompson
Epicenter
Fort Worth, TX

We are looking forward to seeing this bill pass. There are so many that deserve a second chance.

Richard E. Smith

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Second Look Initiative

Texas, TX

I pray that this bill goes through. I was one of those juvenile offenders and spent 31 years inside of prison. I was just recently released (02/16/2021) and it's a difficult transition to being out here as an adult when I went into prison as a child .Thank you for supporting this bill.

Leticia Sembera

Epicenter Second Lookers

Spring, TX

Think about you at age 15. Did you do anything that you may be ashamed to admit? Have you changed since then? All these kids need is a second chance — not to be automatically released, but to at the very least be eligible for parole, to be given a second look.

I am happily married (since 2001) to an ex convict. He has NEVER committed a crime since his release in 1997, and has had his own business since 2008. People can change. I know because I'm married to someone who did.

Patricia Fincher, Ms

Epicenter

Ft Worth, TX

Prayers that our loved ones who have been incarcerated over 20 years get a second look my son never was in any trouble at all prior to his incarceration One mistake and he was given lifeits been 25 years without him please allow them a second look to come up for parole and be given a chance outside bars .thank you Sincerely Ms Fincher

Lisa Gomez

Epicenter - Medical Lab Technician

Las Cruces, TX

I support this bill. It's time for our loved ones to come home. Everyone of them deserve a second chance. Everyone is capable of change. To just leave them there to die is not one of those options. We have all made our fair share of mistakes in our lives. And we have had the opportunity to rectify our mistakes. Well, don't we all think that 20 or 30 years, and even more for some. Is enough for all of these loved ones to realize that it's time for us to give them a second look and a second chance. Their lives are important and each and everyone of them, their lives matter. Isn't it time we let them know that this is their time to shine. And let them know that they deserve this. It's time for them to come home. And to feel the love and the support that they will have with their families.

Kimberly Holder

Self

Boyd, TX

I wish to express support for this bill. My son is serving time on a life sentence, plus 40 stacked from when he was 16. I do not believe he fully grasped how those actions would impact his life and the lives of those around him at that age. He has expressed regret, but that means nothing to anyone at this point. I have accepted that my mother will die and never see her only grandson again. I have accepted that I myself, will never have grand children and our name will die with my son. And up until I read this bill, I accepted that I would never see my son outside the walls of a prison again; all because of something he did when he was an immature, stupid kid.

This bill has given me, and others like me, a little hope that one day - even if it's on my death bed, I may get to hug my son

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without someone watching over us. My son is my only reason to live. And his multiple suicide attempts make me fearful that my one reason to get up in the morning will one day be gone. Give us both a reason to hang on. Please give us hope. He should face consequences, but he shouldn't lose his whole life for something he did when he couldn't fully grasp what life was at the time. He hadn't even lived himself, at that point. Thank you for your time.

Claudio Hernandez

Epicenter Initiative

Arlington, TX

Would like to make a statement as a second looker and a expert witness as to what I've gone through being certified as an adult at 16 and reentering society 23 years later.

Cindy White

Self

Spring, TX

Parole should be an option for youth who have shown Rehabilitation

Brandon White

Self

Spring, TX

Some children should have an option for parole if rehabilitation has taken place

Maria Dimick

Self, US Army analyst

Normanna, TX

This bill is so important. All children are more than their worst mistake. They can contribute to their community when given the opportunity. I support this bill & urge you to support it too. Thank you.

Janella Olguin

Epicenter

Houston, TX

I support HB 686.

Sandra Smith

Second Look 2021

Livingston, TX

I fully support this bill. The majority of These men and women that were sentenced to spend the majority of the rest of their lives should be given the opportunity to become eligible for parole before reaching their senior years. Second chances should be granted to those deserving of it.

Norma Guzman

Epicenter

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Dayton, TX

I support HB 686.

Alex Cunningham

Epicenter

Dayton, TX

I support HB 686.

Albert Villanueva

Alejandro Reyes

Houston, TX

Pray ??for this bill to pass HB686

Kimberly Urquilla

Epicenter

Houston, TX

I support HB 686.

Gabby Reyes

Alejandro Reyes

Houston, TX

Please let this bill pass HB686 ??

Melvyn Guzman

Epicenter

Houston, TX

I support HB 686, it will reunite my family.

Madelyn N Villanueva

Alejandro Reyes

HOUSTON, TX

Please let this bill pass HB686 ??

Yomara Dominguez

Epicenter

Houston, TX

I support HB 686.

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Nicole Spencer

Nobe

Gowrie, TX

I support this bill. My brother has been serving 17 years. I just want my family reunited.

Elisabeth Herrera

Epicenter

Houston, TX

I support HB 686.

Claudio Hernandez

Epicenter Initiative

Arlington, TX

As a second looker I support this bill. I would like I'll also add that is a second looker I have been re-integrated into society I am a part of participant in volunteer work, Have a stable job and I am living proof that releasing someone after so much time you can be a productive member of society. I was incarcerated at 16 years, and after 23 years I was released, there's plenty of scientific proofThat a teenage mind it's still in the process of developing. Please give these youths second chance as I've gotten a second chance in society and have been very productive in it

Dana Blackmon

Self/ Federal Real Estate Specialist

La Marque, TX

My husband was convicted of a crime that he did not commit at 15 years old. He passed away at age 42 in November 2020, he served 27 years as an innocent man out of McLennan County. His name was Jacob Allen Blackmon.

Ashley Molina

Epicenter Initiatives

Houston, TX

This bill would reunite my family. My husband has been incarcerated since he was 17 years old and has served 24 years. I support HB 686. Thank you!

Steven Guzman

Epicenter

Houston, TX

I support HB 686.

Anna Carrillo

Epicenter Initiative

Arlington, TX

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I support HB686. Thank you.

America Guzman
Epicenter Initiative
Houston, TX

I support HB 686. Thank you.

EVANGELINA RANGEL
EPI CENTER INITIATIVE
EL PASO, TX

I support this bill. It would bring my son home to me. He has been in since he was 17 and is now 44. Please give him a chance at life.

Norma Guzman
Epicenter initiative
Houston, TX

I support HB 686, it will give my son a chance to prove his rehabilitation.

REFUGIO RANGEL
EPI CENTER INITIATIVE
EL PASO, TX

This bill would allow me to see my step son as a free man before I die. I am suffering renal failure and do not have much left in this fight. Please bring my step son home.

Jose Esteban Guzman
Epicenter initiative
Houston, TX

I support HB686. It will reunite my family.

Tami Brown
Epicenter Initiative
Hobart, TX

My loved one has been in for 27 years since the age of 17. We would love him home with his family

Leticia Jimenez
Epicenter Initiative
Harlingen, TX

My love one has been incarcerated for 27 years and was 15 yrs when he got certified, as a mother I would be very grateful thank

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you.

Patrick Capps

Vice President, Texas Connected

Nacogdoches, TX

If this bill passes, it would not only improve TDCJ conditions (which Democrats support), but it would also save Texas taxpayers some money (which Republicans support). Everybody wins with this bill.

Jay Gumm, President

Forgiven Felons

Cedar Hill, TX

I, Jay Dan Gumm, and Forgiven Felons support HB686

Stacy Mayle

Epicenter initiative

Spring, TX

It would reunite my family . My loved one has served 26yrs. Been in since he was 17yrs.old. I fully support the HB686 Bill!!!!

Tracie Davis

Aftershock Recover/Epicenter

Milam, TX

Jesus said 7 x 70 that's how many time's we should forgive. These young kid's have grown into wise responsible adults. They have spent decades behind bar's. I think it's time for a second chance. They deserve that. And they have loved one's out here waiting for them. With this virus and everything going on in this world today. Tomorrow isn't promised to anyone of us. Please give it a shot this time. I pray that God will touch everyone of y'all's heart. Please let them come home.

Thank you.

Tracie Davis

Wanda King

Self

Houston, TX

I support this bill.

Shauna Reyes

Epicenter Initiative - Board of Directors

Spring, TX

I am the wife of a Second Looker. Alejandro was certified as an adult when he was only 16. He has been incarcerated for 26 years and is not eligible to see parole for another 14 years. He has not received any major infractions in 22 years.

Although Alejandro grew up in prison he has accomplished so much.

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He has completed the entire Kingdom Brawlers program, including The Call to Arms and Quest for Authentic Manhood
He is now a mentor for men currently going through that program.
He has been a trusted leader within the prison church since 2008 and has served on both the choir and intercessory prayer team.
He currently teaches an Epistle class every Sunday afternoon.
Additionally, every Sunday morning he ministers the book of Romans on the prison radio station.

He is no longer a child and has shown he is now mature and rehabilitated.
Every child is worthy of redemption. Please give him a second look.

Mary Quintanilla
Epicenter Initiative
Falls City, TX

I support HB686. It would mean so much for our family to be reunited again as we are getting older and our son has been in prison for 22 years. Incarcerated since the age of 17. Thank you so much.

Tanja Roberts
Epicenter
Buda, TX

Members of the Juvenile Justice and Family Issues Committee,

Thank you so much for your service to the people of Texas. I thank you for taking the time to hear about HB 686. A Bill that is so very important to my husband, myself, and our family. My husband received a 50 year sentence for a crime he committed at age 16. Billy is 43 years old and has served 25 years of his sentence. I would like to share just a few things about Billy and how he has matured over the years.

Billy struggled throughout grade and middle school. He was sent to alternative school and eventually dropped out by 8th grade. When Billy entered the prison system he was illiterate. He would ask his friends to help him write letters to his parents. Eventually, his mother encouraged Billy to do better for himself and learn how to read and write. Billy picked up the Bible. He looked up his birthday in each chapter until he stumbled across Romans 8:28. It is still his favorite verse today. Billy began to attend school and received his GED. He picked up several trades over the years while working in the kitchen and unit factory. Today he is a proud graduate from Lee college. Billy graduated with two Associates and is a member of the National Honor Society.

Billy attended a Kairos prison ministry weekend 20 years ago (this is equivalent to the Walk to Emmaus). That weekend changed his life forever. Billy became the heart of the ministry at his unit and served as a leader over 15 years! He taught himself how to play the keyboard and guitar. One hundred regular attendees joined him for weekly worship and grouping.

As Billy would say: "Children know right from wrong but they do not understand the consequences." I hope Billy's life is a witness to you, that a young person can grow up, change and become a vital part of his or her community. Passing this Bill would provide an opportunity for Billy to come home, work hard to build a life, and spend time with his aging parents. We thank you so very much for your time and consideration of supporting HB 686.

Sincerely,

Tanja Roberts

Frank Quintanilla
Epicenter Initiative
Falls City, TX

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I support HB686. Because this is a very important bill, my son has been incarcerated for 22 years I believe he deserves a second look. He will have a big family support and we pray for this bill to pass. Thank you!

Patricia Baird

Epicenter

Trinity, TX

I, personally have a loved one that would benefit from this bill as well as myself. This bill is very important to the young ones who have been incarcerated at such a young age. I can speak from experience of watching someone I have known from my early teens, mature while being incarcerated. He was 17 years old when given a sentence of 75 years. In the 23 years he has been incarcerated he has fully matured into a smart, educated and talented man. He has so much to offer society. He has earned two Master's degree, two Bachelor's and various other training to prepare him for the world outside. He has not only done this for himself but to enter the world again prepared and ready for whatever his new life will bring with God guiding his path. Many could say, that at such a young age that prison would harden a person but it's just not so with my loved one. He is still soft-spoken, funny and charming. He never allowed himself to be broken by the system but only to learn from his mistakes and make himself a better person. He has done so much to just be offered a second look for a chance like so many others in his situation. He is definitely ready for the world and prepared.

Dawn Alati, Mrs.

Self Barber

Dripping Springs, TX

I support this bill. Children are more than their worst mistake.

Tanja Roberts

Epicenter

Buda, TX

Members of the Juvenile Justice and Family Issues Committee,

Thank you so much for your service to the people of Texas. I thank you for taking the time to hear about HB 686. A Bill that is so very important to my husband, myself, and our family. My husband received a 50 year sentence for a crime he committed at age 16. Billy is 43 years old and has served 25 years of his sentence. I would like to share just a few things about Billy and how he has matured over the years.

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As Billy would say: "Children know right from wrong but they do not understand the consequences." I hope Billy's life is a witness to you, that a young person can grow up, change and become a vital part of his or her community. Passing this Bill would provide an opportunity for Billy to come home, work hard to build a life, and spend time with his aging parents. We thank you so very much for your time and consideration of supporting HB 686.

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Sincerely,

Tanja Roberts

Diana Salguero

The epicenter family

Houston, TX

I support the Hb 686 bill. My loved one committed a crime in his teenage years that he is serving time for to this day. He is a very smart individual and has big plans for his future. I believe in the development of the brain. I Believe that people change. I believe in advocating for our children. Let's bring them home and show the world that they are worth it. Let's change the minds of those who do not believe rehabilitation. Say no to extreme sentences and give our teens something to look forward to in life. Let's give them motivation to learn a lesson and become the best version of themselves.

Destiny Huerta

Epicenter Initiative

San Antonio, TX

I support HB686 because I believe that giving inmates a second chance to prove that they have served their time for mistakes. Inmates are given life sentences before their life has even started for mistakes that made being teenagers.

Betty Molina

Epicenter

Houston, TX

I support Hb686. It would reunite my family. Our loved one has served 22 years, he's been incarcerated since he was 17. With our hearts in Jesus name we support HB686 and pray for Gods intervention for people's hearts for these young men to get a second chance. Love and respect.

Michelle Jamieson

Self / Behavioral Health Professional

Conroe, TX

Our family supports HB 686. Our loved one has been incarcerated since he was 17 and has served over 27 years. We hope and pray this bill passes so we can have him home again soon.

Jennifer Toon, Mental Health Peer Policy Fellow

Coalition of Texans with Disabilities

Austin, TX

The Coalition of Texans with Disabilities believes in strong public policy that protects and benefits Texans with disabilities, their families, service providers, and communities. We are the largest and oldest member-driven cross-disability organization in the state.

As a person with lived experience in the justice system, I know the importance of redemption. I was 15 years old when I was given a 20-year sentence, with eligibility for parole after 10. This was a tough sentence but nothing compared to many of the teenage girls who were incarcerated along side of me. These girls, who are now middle aged, are still working on sentences that range between 50 to 70 years. I know their stories intimately, stories of childhood abuse, undiagnosed mental health problems,

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and desperation, because these stories are my own.

Youth who receive the harshest punishments in the criminal justice system are those who have the highest level of vulnerability. Studies show that prior to committing an offense, these children have witnessed violence in their homes and/or communities, and experienced trauma such as physical and/or sexual abuse.

Almost two decades of research by experts shows that very few of these children go on to commit serious crimes as they get older. They grow out of behavior that is often a product of chaotic and traumatic childhood experiences, and begin to develop normal adult impulse control.

We know that long term incarceration of these children increases their risk for the early development of chronic illnesses and disabilities. They also become “institutionalized”, having trouble thinking and acting independently because they were forced to conform to the institution for survival. Upon release they then become dependent on public programming and are most likely to reside in shelters or transitional housing.

HB 686 would allow kids a chance to move beyond their childhood mistakes, and develop a meaningful adult life on the outside. While the state is responsible for making sure that they are accountable for their actions, it must also itself be held accountable for ensuring that children have a reasonable opportunity for rehabilitation and a return to society.

We were never the “superpredators” of the 1990s, children who pseudo-scientific research claimed were beyond reach and without remorse. Data proved this inaccurate. My own success and the quiet preserving spirit of the women I know prove it wrong. The superpredator theory is a thing of the past, yet the children, families, and communities it affected the most continue to be harmed by its legacy. With HB 686 legislators are now tasked to usher in the hope of redemption to those of us who were told there was none.

Brenda Craig
Epicenter Initiative
STOCKDALE, TX

I support HB 686

Glenda Quintanilla
Epicenter Initiative
Stockdale, TX

I support HB 686
My husband has been incarcerated for 22 years. This bill would reunite him with his wife and family that love him very much.
Thank you

JOE ROY MARTINEZ
Epicenter Initiative
SEGUIN, TX

I support HB 686

Simone Johnson
Epicenter
Granite Shoals, TX

My son has been incarcerated since he was 17, He has served 26 years,,I and his family support this bill

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Faye Skelton
HB 686
Stockdale, TX

I support HB 686

Carolyn Allen
Self
New Berlin, TX

Please consider passing this bill.

Henry Pena
Alejandro Reyes
Houston, TX

Second chance hope the bell pass.

Larry Emerson, Rev.
Self
Spring, TX

I believe in the possibility of redemption, most especially of young people who committed crimes before the age of 18, and who have demonstrated that they have been rehabilitated and able to re-enter into society and be a positive contributor.

Daniel Hernandez
Epicenter
Saginaw, TX

I think that after 20 years of incarceration for a juvenile convicted as an adult to serve a long sentence would be more than sufficient for the punishment of said crime and enough time for the convicted juvenile to grow up and mature so that he can be a positive contribution to Society instead of a burden on the financial status and lack of other things the state is struggling for because of the number of people incarcerated and people being there for so long because of the extreme sentences and their inability to be even considered for parole because of the mandates the law they were sentenced under requires. It is also a proven fact and a proven statistic that over 90% of juveniles convicted as adults and served over 20 years, once they are released, they never commit another crime. It is also proven that the young population of inmates are the main ones that take part in academic and vocational programs compared to the older inmates, making them more equipped to be a productive citizen upon a second chance at freedom.

Shenitta Warren
Second Look Texas The Epicenter Initiative
Mesquite, TX

My husband got in trouble when he was 16 he got 50th years. He is now 42 he have spent his whole young adult years lock up. He have grown since been a teenager. We met when we were 13 years old. He learned from his mistakes he now have a wife and step kids that need him home his mom is getting older she have health problems we are waiting on hom to come home. He have

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responsibilities now he's family is very important to him.

Curtis Montgomery, MD

Self

Huntsville, TX

I have served as a volunteer for the prison system and have gotten to know a number of the offenders. I realize that some of their offenses were serious. Some of the offenders were quite young when they committed their offense. As a physician I truly believe that the young brain does not function the same as an adult brain perhaps being prone to impulse. I support this Bill just to give the offenders a second look. Not a guarantee. But a second look to determine if their probation could be revisited. One guy I know received a life sentence for murder at the age of 16. Do I know all of the details of his case? No. But after talking to him over several years I do believe he is worthy of a second look. I hope the powers that be will sincerely consider this Bill. Thank you for your consideration.

Latonia Martin

Epicenter Initiative

Palestine, TX

I have a LO that's been in prison for the last 25 years. I support this bill because he deserves a second chance. Due to the fact he's changed his life in so many ways such as he's become a supporting husband, father, step father & friend and always willing to help any one in need yet he understands and take full responsibility for the crime he committed at the age 17 and deeply apologize to everyone that was affected by his poor choice of action.

Yuliana Patlan

Epicenter Initiative

Ennis, TX

My Loved one has been incarcerated since the age of 17. He was still a child when he received an extreme sentence and deserves a second chance to reincorporate into society. I support HB 686, thank you!

Demetrius Hill

Epicenter Initiative

Henderson, TX

Hey my name is Demetrius Hill the son of Fredrick Alexander I feel my father need a second chance at society he been gone my whole life I'm 25 years old i miss him and hope he can be in his grandkids life one day

Armontee Rider

Epicenter initiative

Longview, TX

I believe that anyone who had committed any type of offense at the age of 18 or younger should get a second chance at life. My reasoning for that is because yes we know right from wrong but often at a young age we have terrible judgement or are just living a care free life and just living for the moment without logical thinking. I feel as though if a person has served over 8-10 years for a crime and based off of good behavior while serving that they should become eligible for parole and given a second shot at life. No one is perfect especially not at the ages between 16-20. One mistake or offense shouldn't be the reason that a person has to spend a century or lifetime in prison. All those years that were spent in the jail cell could've been years of a positive turn around for someone's life.

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Douglas Deason

Self

Dallas, TX

This is a very important bill to give defendants convicted as youths, who then work in prison to improve their lives, a second chance at life and liberty.

An early parole hearing can focus on how the person has shown rehabilitation and maturity, and consider factors such as childhood trauma and the hallmark features of youth. By providing an option for early release for rehabilitated, mature individuals, Texas will encourage young offenders to focus on rehabilitation, while saving taxpayer dollars without compromising public safety. This policy will also allow people to fulfill their true potential and become contributing members of the community. Please pass this bill out of committee.

Kendra Litke

Self

Granbury, TX

Please take a second look on this matter.

Yadira Padilla

Self

Lufkin, TX

Hello! First and foremost, Thank you for considering this bill as it means SO much for the second lookers and their Loved ones. I would like for you to place yourself in their shoes and also think what if this would of been my child. Wouldn't it be fair to say that we change throughout the years in how we think and feel about our past actions. Many of these juveniles grew up in dysfunctional families and only found refuge out in the streets. Many have been locked up So many years and desire One day to be able to Live a Happy Life. They have been in there longer than out in the outside world and have missed out on so much as well as lost people they Loved. How much time is enough when you are locked up and you just see your live pass you by... It's a loss for both families and no one wins! I can only imagine on how much it would mean for them to get this bill passed as it represents a chance and let me tell you that they are So Hopeful that you Bless them with such opportunity! So, I ask you the committee to not just think of the second lookers but also to consider the families as they also anxiously await to one day have them back home! We all Pray and have Faith that your hearts will be touched in some way. Please, also take into consideration the crisis of this pandemic as prisons are heavily affected on an endless cycle. Thank you so much and God bless all of you!

Jeronda Clark

Individual

Houston, TX

I think that In 2021 the justice system could definitely do a better job.

MARISA CANO

Epicenter Initiative

SAN ANTONIO, TX

I support HB 686!

Chris Masey

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Autism Society of Texas

austin, TX

The Autism Society of Texas supports HB 686 and the intention to more thoughtfully address parole for youthful offenders.

Rosa Torres

Epicenter

San Antonio, TX

I believe these inmates deserve a second chance at living an adult life out here. At a young age their mind is not maturely developed enough to know or understand consequences or what they are doing. Doing a life sentence or the 30 years before parole eligibility is just wrong. They spent their whole life pretty much in prison which makes it harder for them to adjust if making parole. I understand it depends on the offense, but let's give them a second chance at life with family who loves them and supports them. Being there at a young age for a long period of time makes them institutionalized and harder for them to live a normal life out here. Let's give them that second chance. Thank you

Rosa Torres

Epicenter initiative

San antonio, TX

I fully support the HB 686. This bill would definitely reunite my family. My loved one has done 28 years and was 16 when incarcerated. Please bring them home to a wonderful life with their supportive family. They deserve a second chance at adult life since they never had the chance at adult life out here. Thank you

Kimberly Edwards

Love one/Love one

Dallas, TX

My love one been locked up since the age of 16 (no lives taken), he has been away from his family for 31years. Please consider passing this bill and let him have a life with his love ones. Thanks

Laura Villarreal

Self /scheduling

Houston, TX

I support this house bill 686. I have a brother he's served over 25 years and he was 16 when he was incarcerated.

Shasta Cole

Self

KILLEEN, TX

Please look into this issue. Lives are at stake and reform is on the table. Let's make a change. Today.

Dolores Reyes

Alejandro Reyes

Houston, TX

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Please let this bill pass HB 686

Hortensia Reyes
Alejandro Reyes
Cypress, TX

Please let this bill pass.

Marcia Perry
Soldiers of God Ministry
Lubbock, TX

We have had the opportunity to meet and minister to several of these inmates over the course of the last 10 years. My husband is an ex-offender who, by the grace of God, didn't end up in a position where he lost his youth due to incarceration. These young men and women weren't mature enough to make wise choices. While that doesn't negate the fact that crimes were committed, so many of them have spent entirely too much time behind bars. They've committed to programs, self-improvement and simply want an opportunity to live their lives, to be a part of their families, and make every effort to right their wrongs. My hope and prayer is that this will be their opportunity to do just that.

Andrea Salinas
Self
Edinburg, TX

I support the Second Look Bill Hb 686!

Major Carter
Self, Maintenance Manager for Oil and Gas company
Spring, TX

Time for a change that shows we all understand the failures just locking young people up and forgetting about them, has been. Time for change is now.

Amber Payton
Epicenter
Arlington, TX

I have a loved one that has been incarcerated for over 20 yrs. I support him and I stand behind the HB686.

Claudia Menjivar
Alejandro Reyes
Houston, TX

Please let this bill pass HB686

Roxy Becker
self, UT staff

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Austin, TX

This bill would directly affect members of my family. Please give it consideration and help move it out of committee to receive a vote on the floor. In fact, I believe it would help to create a positive change for many people who would have a chance to become productive citizens.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Thomas Dick

Self

Friendswood, TX

I would appreciate you vote to approve HB 686

Norma Zepeda

Epicenter

Corpus christi, TX

I strongly support this bill.

My loved one has been incarcerated since he was 16 years old. He is now 38. He is not his past mistakes. He deserves a second look. A shot at redemption. He no longer resides in a child mentality. Please help us reunite our family. God bless.

Maurie Spooner

Community Advocate/ Executive Director Freedom Granted Initiative

Houston, TX

I have worked directly with adults that entered the Texas Department of Criminal Justice as youth some as young as 14 years old. They are now well into adulthood and under current legislation will not be eligible for parole consideration for another 10 plus years after having served 20 plus.

I appreciate you all taking the time to advocate on the behalf of these justice involved individuals. It is important that we rehabilitate and not warehouse people.

With rehabilitation and empathy we can achieve meaningful policy changes that ensure our communities are safe, our families are whole and our economy is strong.

Pamela Sweet

pamela sweet

Bonham, TX

My son was locked up at age 16 under law of parties, in 1992. He has served over 29 years in adult prison. Our family (I) need him home. I support this bill.

Rachel Zapata

Epicenter initiative

Amarillo, TX

I support HB686 as it effects my family dramatically. My sister has been gone 26 years since she was 15 years old. She has lost

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more then a quarter century of her life. Please bring her to us. Vote to pass thus bill. Thank you and God Bless Youu all

Alysia Alvarado
Epicenter initiative
Amarillo, TX

I support HB686. My aunt will be gone 27 years since she was 15 years old. I need her home we love her. Please vote for HB686
Thank you

Amy Grant
Epicenter Initiative
West Point, TX

I'm praying for Time Served today. I'm an elderly lady. I been praying for 26 year's now for my son to come home. So we can spend some time together before I pass away.. His dad passed away already year's ago. They didn't get that opportunity. I'm praying that we do. He has a family to come home to. We love him so much. He has a loving wife. It's no perfect people on this earth. We all make or have made mistakes. It's time for forgiveness. Jesus said 7 time's 70.. Can y'all at least give them one of the 70.

Thank you,
Amy Grant

Second Look 2021

Ronald Arceneaux
Personal
Beaumont, TX

Please give these people another opportunity in life. I know first-hand that they can be major contributors to society.

Lakeidru Blaylock, Executive Director
Breaking chains Making Amends
Houston, TX

I believe it is important that we asses the sentences that have been given to individuals that committed crimes when they were under 18 and not fully developed

Kim Jeffley
Loved one incarcerated
Katy, TX

Passing this bill would allow my family member who has been incarcerated since she was 15 years old and for 24 years her freedom again. I support second chance of juveniles.

Vernon Caldwell, Proud Texas Resident
Self
Frisco, TX

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In favor and full support of HB686.

I'm a family member, and a survivor and victim of an inmate current serving a sentence with the TDCJ. My daughter, Krissi Lynn Caldwell TDCJ # 644824 committed this crime when she 16 years old and has been serving her sentence in the TDCJ as an adult since 1992.

HB 686

-I'm in favor of and in full support of HB 686

-HB 686 has the potential over time to affect approximately 4300 current inmates current with the TDCJ system

-Near term, it could allow for 600 inmates to become eligible for a parole hearing earlier than current prescribed by the current laws

-When you review HB 686, you understand that it's not proposed to be a "Get out of jail free card", it simply provides a mean of an inmate to become eligible for a parole hearing earlier than is currently provided

-The Pardons and Parole Board process discipline prescribed in this bill, support a complete and through vetting of each inmate that would become eligible for a parole hearing

Restorative Justice

-In todays society we hear and read much about restorative justice

-I believe this bill is a step toward restorative justice, and ask such, I'm asking for the full support of the Juvenile Justice & Family Issues Board members

-I would look forward to and enjoy the opportunity to help those inmates that could be affective in a positive manner by the bill transition back into society if they were granted parole as a result of the earlier parole hearing that could occur as a result of the approval of this bill.

Respectfully,
Vernon R. Caldwell

Jessica Threadgill
Epicenter Initiative
Clarksville, TX

It would free my family who's been locked up since he was 16 which is 28 years he can't get back

James Horner
Self, Technology Executive
Plano, TX

As we continue to learn about brain and cognitive development through scientific research, it has become increasingly clear that 18 years old, an age that was arbitrarily determined, should not be the determinant for juveniles imprisonment beyond reason. Please consider further review of this policy.

Belle Truax
Self
Ingram, TX

I vote Aye. Yes. I firmly believe this bill should be passed and sent to the Senate to pass and allow inmates that were minors charged as adults to be given the opportunity to come up for parole

Jahcorrian Burkes
Self/ Texas Realtor
Katy, TX
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Please pass this bill to help set my aunt Jennifer Jeffley free. She was wrongfully accused of a murder there's evidence she did not commit. She has payed a 20 year debt to society for just being associated with the wrong people.

Belle Truax

Self

Ingram, TX

YES! Please pass this bill

Christian Bonilla

Self

Ingram, TX

I vote yes for this bill to pass

Maria Patlan, Home

Epicenter initiative

Ennis, TX

I support the bill HB686

Aislinn King

Self

Portland, TX

I support this bill being passed!

Studies have proven that a teenager's brain isn't fully developed and therefore they do stupid things, wrong stupid things, but we should not lock them away and throw away the key without giving their case a second look at. This bill doesn't open the prison cells and release the inmates automatically- it gives their case a second look, and the parole board a chance to see if the inmates have been rehabilitated and taken advantage of the options to better themselves while incarcerated. Isn't that why prisons offer classes and courses? So I beseech you to vote to pass this bill and give these inmates a chance at a second life.

Echo Clark

Self

Hunt, TX

Allow juvenile/men/women a glimpse of hope for the chance to live a meaningful life! Take action today!

Julie Truax

Self- accounting assistant

Bryan, TX

I completely support this. These offenders were children with not fully developed brains. Those who have been "rehabilitated" deserve the opportunity to prove that they are capable of being contributing members of society.

Adrian REYES

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Alejandro Reyes

Cypress, TX

Please let bill pass

Conny Branham

Self

Hutto, TX

As the parents of a murdered son, and whose murder involved a juvenile, we request your support in opposing SB686 because it would be cruel to victims. If violent juvenile offenders are certified to stand trial as adults and are sent to prison, HB 686 could make them eligible for release on parole much earlier than under current law if given a lengthy sentence, which demeans the severity of their crimes, and devalues victims. These juveniles caused irreversible damage, and parole hearings will trap victims in a never-ending cycle of trauma.

If a 16-year old gets to start parole hearings after 20 years, that means victims will have to attend parole hearings every 2 (!) years, starting at the offender's young age of 36. The offender would get hearings at 36, 38, 40, 42, 44, 46, 48, 50, 52, 54, 56, 58, 60 and so on. Victims must participate in these hearings, revictimizing them over and over again for many years. Multiple generations would need to relive the nightmare every two years. Victims need and deserve finality, not revictimization. We feel that when a 16-year old is convicted in an adult court, and is given a long sentence, it would be highly inappropriate for them to potentially be released at the age of 36, especially if their victims didn't get to live, some not even past the age of 2 (see Jose "Lalo" Eduardo Arredondo (16) Victim: Katherine Cardenas, age: 2, Crime: Kidnapping, abduction, rape, child cruelty, & murder, Laredo, TX Sep 5, 2009). There is no second chance or do-over for victims of violent crimes.

On June 24, 2020, our 26-year-old son Christopher was robbed, brutally assaulted, and murdered by five individuals in Travis County. One of the five was 16 at the time, and was charged with aggravated robbery. The 16-year old went on to commit armed robberies in Williamson County after our son's murder and was charged there as well. The 16-year-old was one of the more sadistic ones that continued to assault our son after he was beaten unconscious during the robbery, breaking his face and bones. Our son was then shot to death. We searched for 37 days until we found his body in a cornfield in Manor, Texas. Our son had to have a closed casket because none of the five talked. They even took away our ability to say a final goodbye to our only son, which was absolutely devastating.

We are worried that once juveniles are given sentences that are proportionate to the extremely violent crimes they committed, this new legislation will be used to drastically shorten these sentences.

We appreciate you taking the time to read this.

Morgan Jeffley

Self

Forney, TX

I am making this comment on behalf of myself and a family member that I feel could greatly benefit from the passing of this bill. I support this bill due to the fact of my family member serving for 28 years from the tender age of 16, this bill would help reunite a member of my family after years of heartbreak and struggle. I support bill HB686.

Sarah Truax

Self

Franklin, TX

Please give these people a chance to have a life outside of prison before they are too old to even be a productive member of society.

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Princess Vlandamir Judd

EpicCenter Initiative - Second Look Texas 2021

Morrisville, TX

Hb686 - Epicenter Initiative I support this bill. This bill will reunite families. My loved one served 26 years, he's been incarcerated since he was 15. We were waiting for this day to come - unfortunately, my son at the age of 41 passed away on 03/08/2021 in the care of the Michaels Unit in Tennessee Colony, TX. I am still in support and fighting for all the others young men and women that has been impacted by Juvenile Justice.

I support this bill - HB686.

Thank You!

Princess Vlandamir Judd

Leroy Vega

Epicenter Initiative

Edinburg, TX

I support the Second Look Bill Hb686.

Shandra MosleyBanks

God Chosen Vessels

Texas, TX

There are so many inmates that deserve a second chance

Wolf sittler

Texas Inmate Families Association

austin, TX

Existing Texas laws acknowledge that those under 18 and 21 do not have the same rights and privileges as mature adults. Those laws are based on what has long been known about "under-age" individuals.....they are not as culpable as adults and thus should not be held to the same standards. The U.S. Supreme Court has held that juveniles are different and that difference should be a mitigating factor in determining legal responses to lawbreaking. Neuroscientists have clearly established that young adults' brains are still maturing, and this needs to be considered in how they are dealt with. The U.S. Armed Forces actively recruit young adults precisely because of their ability to change and adapt to the requirements of defending our country. Juvenile Courts were established 100 years ago because of the long-known fact that young adults need to be treated differently than mature ones.

The American Law Institute, creators of the Model Penal Code, updated the code in 2017.

(<https://robinainstitute.umn.edu/news-views/new-model-penal-code-criminal-sentencing-approved-american-law-institute-comprehensive>)

“(2) There is always an exemption from mandatories in the Code for juveniles who have been tried as adults. (3) All sentencing courts are given an “extraordinary departure power” to override the force of mandatory minimums “when extraordinary and compelling circumstances demonstrate in an individual case that the mandatory penalty would result in an unreasonable sentence.” (4). The MPCs gives every prisoner an opportunity for a judicial “second look” at their sentence after 15 years, no matter how long their original sentence, and even if their original sentence includes a mandatory minimum prison term of greater than 15 years.

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Texas prisons now contain hundreds of Second Lookers serving extremely long prison terms. Many of them have transformed themselves into responsible, mature adults. If you could visit them, review their institutional records, and speak with correctional staff who know them, you would see that further incarceration makes no moral or economic sense. It is time Texas move beyond the “one size fits all” model that has dominated parole policy. One way to implement the conservative idea that “prisons are for those we’re afraid of, not the ones we’re mad at” is by voting HB 686 out of committee and on to the House for due consideration.

The Model Penal Code recommends review at 15 years. What you are considering does so at 20 years. Supporting HB 686 is a modest step in a sensible direction.

Karrn Reed
Epicenter
Dallas, TX

My LO was incarcerated at the age of 17 years old and has served 23 years. Please pass this bill to allow for him to have a chance at parole and begin a life that he hasn't had the chance to live. Your support is more than appreciated. Please, give him and so many others a Second Look. Thank you so much.

Clay Taylor, Executive Director
DPS Officers Association
Austin, TX

The DPS Officers Association represents over 5000 men and women who are Troopers, Rangers, CID Special Agents, Forensic Scientists and Communications specialists. We are opposed to this bill. Allowing murderers and rapists to be considered for early parole for any reason is wrong. The victims of these heinous crimes deserve that the offender serve time for his/her crimes.

Robert Elzner
Self
Conroe, TX

I am in support of HB 686. At this age, most males are not mature and follow emotion rather than rationale thinking.

Karen Page, Retired
Myself
San Angelo, TX

I support HB 686. The passage of this bill will give those who are now adults, but were incarcerated as children to, at the very least, get the opportunity to be reviewed by the BPP. Thank you.

Emily Bloom
Self
Austin, TX

I'm in strong support of this Second-Look bill.

Deborah Scott
Epicenter Initiative
Humble, TX
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I fully support HB 686. My son has been incarcerated since he was 14 years old and have already served 25 years in prison. This bill will reunite my family, Thank you.

Deborah Scott

Benjamin Hernandez

Epicenter Initiative

San Antonio, TX

I support HB686. I know various men in TDCJ who have been incarcerated since they were teenagers. This bill will simply give them the opportunity to be reunited with their families if approved.

Rebecca Allen, Education/ Testing specialist

self

Austin, TX

Please pass out of committee the "second look" bill HB 686 by Rep. Joe Moody during the House Committee on Juvenile Justice and Family today. I support this issue and hope it will pass out of committee. Thank you for your hard work.

Monica Branham

Self

Hutto, TX

A 16 year old juvenile was involved in my brothers murder. They are not children, the are juvenile offenders. I am totally against this bill because it doesn't consider the victims family at all!

Ashley Arriaga

self

Lorena, TX

I support this bill

Stacey Carrillo

Sellf

Orange Grove, TX

I'm in support of this bill.

Melanie Villela

Self, Independent Contractor

Houston, TX

Please consider this bill it is inhumane to give people who are not adults lifetime sentences or to be eligible for parole after decades of growing up in a prison.

Tammy Patton

Epicenter/Deon Williams

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Clarksville, TX

I hope we get what we need

Juan Mendoza, Lockhart City Council Member District 1

City of Lockhart

Lockhart, TX

To help fellow Texan!

Harry Richardson

SELF

HOUSTON, TX

Relating to the release on parole of certain inmates convicted of an offense committed when younger than 18 years of age; changing parole eligibility.

DeAnna Wills

Self

Alvin, TX

Victims and family first

Gentil Najera, Mrs.

None

Austin, TX

HB686

Brenda Keeney

Self

Hutto, TX

These kids are living life sentences. No early parole