



February 13, 2024

Dear Chairman Hill, Vice Chairman Wadsworth, Ranking Member England, and esteemed members of the Judiciary Committee,

I write today on behalf of the Christian Coalition to express our support for HB 29.

The Christian Coalition has a long history of supporting strong families, public safety, and policies that align with the Christian values of our supporters. Among those Christian values is a recognition that we all make mistakes, but that we can also be forgiven and redeemed; that people can and do change; and the need to balance both justice and mercy. And we recognize that every case is different, and that blanket policies do not allow for the case-by-case consideration that many of these situation's demand.

HB 29 is worthy of consideration for a number of those reasons. It allows for the individual merits of each case to be considered rather than a one size fits all. It also allows for the discretion of the judge, the input of the prosecution and victim, and the evidence of change exhibited by the defendant to this point.

It allows for evidence-based practices and asks whether the original decision that was made is still what is in the best interest of the people of Alabama, and the state. The goal of our corrections system is to make our communities safer, to disincentivize poor behavior and crime, to provide a measure of justice for victims, and to rehabilitate the offender and return them to society as a contributing member, when appropriate.

This comes at a great cost to the taxpayers. The older a prisoner gets, the more it costs the state to house and care for them. This is particularly true when there are serious medical concerns. It is far more costly to provide end of life medical care in a corrections facility than it is in a private facility or at home.

There is also a cost when we lose members of the workforce. When we consider the number of employers looking for labor, we must also consider that we shrink that pool with every person who is locked up and not working.



**Christian Coalition**

None of this would suggest that we do not recognize the place for incarceration. It is certainly appropriate in many cases and should not be eliminated. But it does make sense to be constantly evaluating whether we are using it in the best ways possible, and whether, if the evidence suggests that someone has been rehabilitated, and is not a threat to society or themselves, it is in the best interest of all parties involved to continue to house them at taxpayer expense and keep them out of the workplace.

We encourage you to support HB 29, and allow the judge and other interested parties to have the right to take a second look at whether we got the sentence right on the first try. This bill provides guardrails to ensure that all relevant voices retain their right to be heard and have their interest considered in these cases and provides no guarantee of a change in sentence. But it does offer the chance to evaluate all the latest data and evidence to be sure that we achieve the best outcomes possible.

Thank you for your consideration, and for the work you do to make Alabama a great place to live, work, and raise a family.

Respectfully,  
Keith den Hollander