

Members of the Alabama Legislature
State Capitol
Montgomery, AL

Dear lawmaker:

As pastors, faith leaders, and prison ministry volunteers in the state of Alabama, we understand and recognize the importance of using our voice to support matters of justice. We are writing to you to ask for your support of the Second Chance bill, offering individuals who have been sentenced to life without parole for crimes involving no injury to a person a chance to show they've changed and an opportunity to live the remainder of their life outside of prison walls. These people are beloved parents, spouses, and siblings, who deserve to return home to their families.

Like many of you, we have come to believe in, and have often experienced ourselves, the grace of redemption and the extension of mercy. It is our understanding that the individuals who would be impacted by this bill have indeed changed, have experienced a redemption of sorts, and should be extended mercy.

It is our belief that all of us are required to “act justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God (*Micah 6:8*).” We certainly understand there are times in which punishment must account for wrongdoing; however, as is often seen in the Scriptures, true justice is one that prioritizes proportionality– the difficult balance of both accountability and mercy, and a correlation between that wrongdoing and the severity of the punishment imposed. As Saint Thomas Aquinas once said, “Mercy without justice is the mother of dissolution; justice without mercy is cruelty.”

A sentence of life without parole for a crime in which no one was physically injured is surely neither proportionate nor merciful.

Thank you for your faithful service to our state and for your thoughtful consideration of this legislation. We appreciate your care for the safety of Alabama communities as well as your dedication to those who have been impacted by crimes and violence. We hope, for the people impacted by this excessive sentencing and the communities that could be positively impacted by their lives outside were they to be resentenced, you will choose true justice by extending mercy and granting these individuals another chance.

Sincerely,

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Prison Ministry Director
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Lead Pastor
The Well Church Florence
Florence, AL

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Vestavia Hills, AL

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