

**California laws must reflect science on human brain development!
AB 1308 would raise the age of
Youth Offender Parole through 25 years old.**

**Be a part of passing this bill!
Here a set of six different support letters for
AB 1308 to Governor Brown.**

You can print them and:

- ⇒ Choose the ones you like best and sign it;
- ⇒ Give them to friends and family members to sign;
- ⇒ Print bunch of sets and bring them to your church or other group to get people to sign in support.

**Suggestion: Don't leave it to others to send their letters in.
Collect them and send them in yourself!**

Options for sending by fax or email

Human Rights Watch will send the letter for you: Send us your letter, and we'll get it to your Senator and Governor Brown. You can send it to Human Rights Watch via fax (310-477-4622) or by email (send to estradl@hrw.org with the subject line: "AB 1308 support letters.")

The Honorable Jerry Brown
Governor of California
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

SUPPORT FOR ASSEMBLY BILL 1308 (Stone)

Dear Governor Brown:

I support Assembly Bill 1308 (AB 1308, Assembly Member Stone) hope you will support this important bill. Assembly Bill 1308 requires young adults to be accountable for their actions, but recognizes that young people have the capacity to learn and grow from their mistakes. Assembly Bill 1308 would require a young person who was 25 years old or younger at the time of a crime and sentenced to a long adult prison term serve a minimum of 15, 20, or 25 years in prison, depending on the seriousness of the crime. This is a substantial amount of time for any young adult. Then, at a parole board hearing, commissioners would consider the age of the person at the time of the crime and his or her subsequent growth, maturity, and rehabilitation.

Our laws should reflect scientific findings. Neurological research concludes that the human brain is not fully formed until early adulthood, and that young people do not have adult levels of judgment, impulse control, or ability to foresee the consequences of their actions. Through the mid-twenties, young people continue to develop into fully-mature adults. The vast majority outgrow the immaturity and behavior that leads to crime and choose a different path in life. Assembly Bill 1308 would allow a decision about the possibility of release after an individual has been incarcerated for many years and has proven by his or her actions whether parole is merited.

California law should be grounded in scientific fact. I urge you to sign this important bill into law.

Sincerely,

Signed

Printed Name

Address

Email

cc: Human Rights Watch (fax: 310-477-4622)

The Honorable Jerry Brown
Governor of California
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Assembly Bill 1308 (Stone): Support

Dear Governor Brown,

I support Assembly Bill 1308. In California, youth, age 25 and younger, who do not have adult levels of judgment, impulse control, or ability to foresee the consequences of their actions are sentenced to life in prison. They are punished without consideration of the capacity of young people to change and mature.

California already recognizes in several arenas the need to protect and provide special opportunities to young adults. Among other things, state law extends foster care services to age 21; sets Division of Juvenile Justice jurisdiction at age 23; and provides special opportunities for young adults in prison up to age 25. California recently raised to age 21 the age at which one can buy cigarettes, the same age required to use alcohol. Our laws recognize that young people are not mature enough for these responsibilities. These laws are based in part on scientific evidence concluding that certain areas of the brain, particularly those that affect judgment and decision-making, do not fully develop until the mid-20's.

The fact that young adults are still developing means they have an especially strong capacity to grow and change. The prospect of a meaningful chance to earn parole creates hope in young people and gives them strong motivation to immediately choose a path of self-improvement in prison. Please sign this important legislation into law.

Sincerely,

Signed

Printed Name

Address

Email

cc: Human Rights Watch (fax: 310-477-4622)

The Honorable Jerry Brown
Governor of California
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Support for AB 1308

Dear Governor Brown:

I am a concerned citizen of California. I am writing to tell you that I support AB 1308, authored by Assembly Member Stone, and I respectfully ask that you sign this bill into law.

Assembly Bill 1308 seeks to extend from age 23 to 25 eligibility under existing parole law. In 2015, the California legislature passed SB 261 in recognition that young people are different from adults and deserve special consideration in the parole process. SB 261, codified at California Penal Code §3051, provides people who were under the age of 23 at the time of their crime and have served, depending on the seriousness of the offense, between 15 and 25 years in prison, the opportunity to demonstrate personal growth and rehabilitation to the parole board. It increases likelihood of parole for those who can prove rehabilitation.

For many years, California has sought to address prison overcrowding and reduce unnecessary expenditures on incarceration. The state should focus our resources where they are most needed and choose pathways to reducing incarceration that emphasize rehabilitation. Under AB 1308, only eligible individuals who prove to the parole board, and Governor where applicable, that they have successfully rehabilitated and do not pose a risk of danger to society could be released. California could stop spending money to incarcerate these individuals who have been rehabilitated, and instead let them reintegrate into society to become productive contributing citizens. By focusing our resources on the cases that are a continuing threat to public safety, passage of AB 1308 would save millions of state dollars.

I respectfully ask you to sign this into law.

Sincerely,

Signed

Printed Name

Address

Email

cc: Human Rights Watch Fax: 310.477.4622

The Honorable Jerry Brown
Governor of California
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Please vote YES on AB 1308

Dear Governor Brown:

I support passage of AB 1308, and I urge you to sign it into law. I believe California should treat young people fairly, and recognize that young adults are neurologically and developmentally different from fully-matured adults. Our laws should reflect the fact that young people have tremendous potential to mature and change.

Assembly Bill 1308 requires young adults to be accountable for their actions, but recognizes that young people have the capacity to learn and grow from their mistakes. Assembly Bill 1308 is smart on crime and fiscally-wise for California. This bill would give young people the hope and motivation to change the direction of their lives and earn release that is based on rehabilitation.

I thank you for your support of this bill.

Sincerely,

Signed

Printed Name

Address

Email

cc: Human Rights Watch (via fax, 310-477-4622)

The Honorable Jerry Brown
Governor of California
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Assembly Bill 1308 Support

Dear Governor Brown:

I support AB 1308. Assembly Bill 1308 holds young adults who committed a crime at age 25 or younger responsible for their criminal behavior, but gives them a chance to turn their lives around. This bill would make any individual who committed a crime at age 25 or younger the opportunity to have a Youth Offender Parole hearing after he or she has served 15 to 25 years in prison, depending on his or her original sentence. The Youth Offender Parole law currently applies to individuals up to the age of 23.

Youth Offender Parole is based on developmental and neurological evidence about adolescents and young adults. Neuroscientific research finds that the process of cognitive brain development continues into early adulthood. For boys and young men especially, this developmental process continues into the mid-20s. The still-developing areas of the brain, particularly those that affect judgment and decision-making, are highly relevant to criminal behavior and culpability.

California law should recognize both the vulnerability and potential of young adults, and set in place a meaningful opportunity for young people to earn parole. Please support AB 1308.

Very truly yours,

Signed

Printed Name

Address

Email

cc: Human Rights Watch, Fax: (310) 477-4622

The Honorable Jerry Brown
Governor of California
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: AB 1308

Dear Governor Brown:

I am writing in support of AB 1308. Our laws should reflect the fact that young people have tremendous potential to mature and change. Assembly Bill 1308 holds young adults who committed a crime at age 25 or younger responsible for their criminal behavior, but gives them a chance to turn their lives around. Assembly Bill 1308 is smart on crime and fiscally-wise for California. This bill would give young people the hope and motivation to change the direction of their lives and earn release that is based on rehabilitation.

AB 1308 would help California law promote rehabilitation and benefit everyone in California (not just those immediately impacted by the law). The bill holds youth offenders accountable for their actions. But it also gives them hope, which will motivate them to turn their lives around. It will also enable California to stop wastefully spending tens of thousands of dollars a year on incarcerating people who have rehabilitated, and instead allow those people to be reunited with our communities and become productive, tax-paying citizens.

This bill would give young people a second chance. I think our laws should reflect scientific findings, recognize that young people are especially capable of redemption, and require those who commit serious crimes at a young age to work towards rehabilitation. We know that the adolescent brain is not fully formed until well into early adulthood, and that young people do not have adult levels of judgment, impulse control, or ability to assess risks. AB 1308 would make California law consistent with these basic scientific truths.

Please support AB 1308 and sign it into law.

Sincerely yours,

Signed

Address

Printed Name

Email

Cc: Human Rights Watch (fax: 310-477-4622)