

# **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 are three sets of six different support letters for AB 1308.**

**Three people need to hear from you! Please pick three letters:**

- 1. One for your Assembly Member**
- 2. One for your Senator, and**
- 3. One for 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!**

**Two options for sending by fax or email**

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

**OR**

2. You can fax the letter to your Assembly Member yourself: You can find out who your Assembly Member is by using this website: <http://findyourrep.legislature.ca.gov/> Click on the link with your Assembly Member's name and you will be redirected to their website where you can find their fax number.

**1. PICK ONE OF THE FOLLOWING LETTERS FOR**

**YOUR ASSEMBLY MEMBER**

The Honorable  
California State Assembly Member  
State Capitol  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Via facsimile

**SUPPORT FOR ASSEMBLY BILL 1308**

Dear Assembly Member:

I support Assembly Bill 1308 (AB 1308) and thank you for your support of 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 your aye vote.

Sincerely,

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Signed

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Printed Name

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Address

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Email

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

The Honorable  
California State Assembly Member  
State Capitol  
Sacramento, CA 95814

*Via facsimile*

**Assembly Bill 1308: Please support this bill**

Dear Assembly Member,

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 support this important legislation.

Sincerely,

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Signed

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Address

\_\_\_\_\_  
Email

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

VIA FAX

The Honorable  
California State Assembly Member  
State Capitol  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: Support for AB 1308**

Dear Assembly Member:

I am a concerned citizen of California. I am writing to tell you that I support AB 1308, and ask you to support it too.

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.

Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,

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Signed

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Printed Name

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Address

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Email

cc: Human Rights Watch Fax: 310.477.4622

The Honorable  
California State Assembly Member  
State Capitol  
Sacramento, CA 95814

*Via facsimile*

**RE: Please vote YES on AB 1308**

Dear Assembly Member:

I support passage of AB 1308, and I urge you to vote “yes” on it. 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,

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

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Signed

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Printed Name

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Address

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Email

The Honorable  
California State Assembly Member  
State Capitol  
Sacramento, CA 95814

*Via facsimile*

**RE: Assembly Bill 1308 Support**

Dear Assembly Member:

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,

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Signed

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Printed Name

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Address

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Email

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

The Honorable  
California State Assembly Member  
State Capitol  
Sacramento, CA 95814

*Via facsimile*

**RE: AB 1308**

Dear Assembly Member:

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.

Sincerely yours,

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Signed

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Address

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Printed Name

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Email

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



**2. PICK ONE OF THE FOLLOWING LETTERS FOR  
YOUR SENATOR**

The Honorable  
California State Senator  
State Capitol  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Via facsimile

**SUPPORT FOR ASSEMBLY BILL 1308**

Dear Senator:

I support Assembly Bill 1308 (AB 1308) and thank you for your support of 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 your aye vote.

Sincerely,

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Signed

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Printed Name

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Address

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Email

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

The Honorable  
California State Senator  
State Capitol  
Sacramento, CA 95814

*Via facsimile*

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Dear Senator,

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 support this important legislation.

Sincerely,

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Signed

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Address

\_\_\_\_\_  
Email

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

VIA FAX

The Honorable  
California State Senator  
State Capitol  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: Support for AB 1308**

Dear Senator:

I am a concerned citizen of California. I am writing to tell you that I support AB 1308, and ask you to support it too.

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.

Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,

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Signed

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Printed Name

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Address

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Email

cc: Human Rights Watch Fax: 310.477.4622

The Honorable  
California State Senator  
State Capitol  
Sacramento, CA 95814

*Via facsimile*

**RE: Please vote YES on AB 1308**

Dear Senator:

I support passage of AB 1308, and I urge you to vote “yes” on it. 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,

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

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Signed

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Printed Name

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Address

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Email

The Honorable  
California State Senator  
State Capitol  
Sacramento, CA 95814

*Via facsimile*

**RE: Assembly Bill 1308 Support**

Dear Senator:

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,

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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.

Sincerely yours,

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Signed

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Address

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Printed Name

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Email

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

**3. PICK ONE OF THE FOLLOWING LETTERS FOR**

**THE GOVERNOR**



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

Via email

**SUPPORT FOR ASSEMBLY BILL 1308**

Dear Governor Brown:

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

Sincerely,

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The Honorable Jerry Brown  
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*Via email*

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Printed Name

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VIA FAX

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Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,

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Signed

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Printed Name

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Address

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Email

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The Honorable Jerry Brown  
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State Capitol  
Sacramento, CA 95814

*Via email*

**RE: Please vote YES on AB 1308**

Dear Governor Brown:

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Sincerely,

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

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Signed

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Printed Name

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Very truly yours,

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Printed Name

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California State Senator  
State Capitol  
Sacramento, CA 95814

*Via email*

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