**Bill #5149**

Feb 15, 2023

As I sit here today and think that anyone would be careless enough to think that a bill to eliminate the punishment of “life without parole, for capital offenses”- should be considered is astonishing to me. This would allow some two dozen inmates at the ACI to be eligible for the possibility of an early release- These are serious, violent criminals that committed heinous crimes. This bill is a clear message to all of the families that have been affected by losing family members who CLEARLY DO NOT get a second chance in life, because their FIRST chance was taking away from them. This does not allow the families to heal and have justice served. I strongly disagree with the statement, “life without the chance of parole is basically the second death penalty,” as Rep. Jay Edwards stated.

These prisoners are still breathing, they are still waking up and going to sleep, they have visitations and carry on with their lives and they are supported physically and financially by taxpayers. The victims aren’t breathing, they will never get to open their eyes again or have visitors. They lost their chance on carrying on with their lives. Allowing cases from 1991 forward to be eligible for potential early release is an absolute crime!

Kristen Jorge’s is my cousin, she was once a vibrant, beautiful, funny young 16-year-old girl that had a bright future ahead of her. Devastatingly, her life was ended by the hands of a violent criminal and was heinous and premeditated. She was stabbed 27 times, her throat sliced prior so she could not scream. She was raped and stuffed under her bed. She fought, as skin was under her nails. Previously, her murderer committed many crimes, and he is a habitual offender. He also had committed other violent acts to my cousin after he had murdered her- those charges were dropped due to his life without parole sentencing. My family has gone through a tragic experience that will stay with all of us for the rest of our lives. We will never get her back. She is missed and loved dearly. Not a day goes by that she is not thought off. For anyone to say that because these offenders are old and in for life, they deserve a second chance. I would challenge them to put themselves in the shoes of any family members or loved ones who have had a life brutally taking from them or better yet, to imagine that it was their daughter, son, cousin, niece, etc. How would you feel, how would you react? How would you sleep at night knowing that your family members killer could be set free? Would you then become the prisoner, not knowing if you could leave your home, in fear of knowing they are free?

If this bill should pass it would be a neglectful way of saying that a life is not valued, and that it is okay to kill others…because in America we believe in supporting the guilty instead of the innocent. A pure injustice to our justice system and our nation.