

Kentucky Needs a Second Look Law

People Change. The Law Should Recognize It.

A Second Look Law would allow courts to review lengthy prison sentences after years of demonstrated rehabilitation and growth.

THE PROBLEM

Kentucky currently provides no meaningful judicial review process for many people serving decades-long sentences, even after years of demonstrated rehabilitation, educational achievement, treatment participation, and positive institutional behavior.

People continue serving lengthy sentences long after they have matured, accepted responsibility, and demonstrated change. Excessive sentences often separate families, increase taxpayer costs, and fail to recognize rehabilitation while doing little to improve public safety.

KEY DATA

770,000+

People in U.S. prisons serving
10+ year sentences

260,000+

Have already served 10+ years—nearly double since 2000

56%

Of all people in prison serving
10+ year sentences

15 Years

Model Penal Code recommends
judicial review after 15 years

Public Safety Risk Declines With Age



67.6% → 6.0%

People released after age 60 are nearly 11x less likely to be rearrested than those released before 21.

A person sentenced at 20 who remains incarcerated at 40 or 50 is often no longer the same public safety risk. Kentucky should review lengthy sentences when rehabilitation and maturity have been demonstrated.

Source: U.S. Sentencing Commission, The Effects of Aging on Recidivism Among Federal Offenders.



Create a Kentucky Second Look Law

A Second Look Law would allow individuals who have served a substantial portion of their sentence to petition a court for review.

A judge could consider:

- Rehabilitation efforts
- Educational achievements
- Institutional conduct
- Public safety risk
- Age and maturity
- Victim input
- Family support and release plans

A Second Look Law does not guarantee release. It guarantees review.

THE IMPACT

Stronger Families

Allows families separated by lengthy incarceration to remain connected and provides hope.

Safer Communities

People released at older ages have significantly lower rates of reoffending.

Better Use of Tax Dollars

Reduces unnecessary incarceration costs while focusing resources on public safety.

Incentivizes Rehabilitation

Encourages education, treatment, vocational training, and positive behavior.

WHY THIS CHANGE IS NEEDED

People should not be defined forever by the worst moment of their lives.

A sentence imposed decades earlier cannot predict who someone will become after years of growth, accountability, education, treatment, faith, and rehabilitation.

Kentucky should create a process that recognizes rehabilitation while still protecting public safety.

**People Change.
Kentucky's laws should recognize that change.**

REAL KENTUCKY EXAMPLE

40-Year Sentence | Over 9 years served | Nearly 10 years disciplinary-free
Microsoft certification | NCRC certification | NA participant | Prison ministry leader
Unable to access additional programs due to parole date being too far out

Should Kentucky have a process to review cases where rehabilitation has clearly occurred?



Still Standing Initiative

From Streets to Strength. From Prison to Purpose.

Supporting incarcerated individuals and families through advocacy, connection, storytelling, and meaningful criminal justice reform.

Because behind every number is a name.
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