

There are two **very important** bills in committee in the House of Representatives now that need our voice and support. Read about them below, then please take 5 minutes of your time to sign on to support these two bills.

The first is HB 1344 – the long sentences review bill

HB 1344 Second Chances for People Incarcerated as Young Adults promotes evidence-based sentencing and advances racial equity by providing people given long sentences at young ages the opportunity to go before the Indeterminate Sentence Review Board to demonstrate their change.

In 2014, following the Miller v. Alabama ruling and rational by the U.S. Supreme Court, Washington State passed the Second Chance Bill (SB 5064) which granted review to youth who were sentenced for crimes committed prior to their 18th birthday. This legislation, which was drafted in part by the Washington Prosecutors Association, recognized that existing law was not constitutional. It also recognized the underlying science from Miller, which states a young person’s brain continues to develop well into their twenties and is rarely fully developed prior to the age of 25. Although the ruling recognized the “lessened culpability” and “capacity for change” of young adults, i.e. people age 18 – 25, it only offered people who were sentenced for crimes they committed while under the age of 18 the opportunity to have their sentence reviewed.

There are many success stories from the passage of this legislation. People released have gone on to attend law school, form non-profits, and greatly contribute to the community.

HB 1344 **increases the age** for sentence review consideration from 18 to 25. It is time to amend the law to make it consistent with the underlying science, the numerous court cases that have been decided since Miller, as well as the growing national understanding that young adults need to be treated differently in the criminal justice system. HB 1344 helps Washington sentencing practices become more just and evidence based.

Read more about it here: <https://look2justice.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/HB-1344.pdf>

Full bill here: <http://lawfilesexternal.wa.gov/biennium/2021-22/Pdf/Bills/House%20Bills/1344.pdf?q=20210204224106>

The second is HB 1413 - Fresh Start for Youth Bill (juvenile points)

HB 1413 Fresh Start for Youth legislation promotes fair and proportional sentencing and advances racial equity by **retroactively** prohibiting the use of juvenile adjudications in adult offender score calculations in the Sentencing Reform Act.

Fresh Start for Youth legislation would prevent juvenile adjudications from automatically increasing the sentencing ranges for individuals sentenced in adult court. It would also require offender scores that included juvenile points to be recalculated, promoting racial equity and addressing the egregious impact of current practices on communities of color.

What is at issue? Sentences for individuals who have been convicted of felony offenses are largely determined by their offender scores, a score that requires—under Washington’s Sentencing Reform Act—inclusion of all juvenile court felony dispositions. Most states, however, do not include juvenile adjudications when calculating offender scores.

Read more here: <https://look2justice.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/HB-1413.pdf>

Full bill here: <http://lawfilesexternal.wa.gov/biennium/2021-22/Pdf/Bills/House%20Bills/1413.pdf?q=20210204224139>

Here's an easy peasy how-to sign on in support of these bills:

Go to: <https://app.leg.wa.gov/csiremote/>

Click on "House" then "Public Safety" then the meeting for "2/9/21 at 8:00 AM."

You will see three bills.

Click on HB 1344 – Long sentences review

AND THEN LATER

HB 1413 – Juvenile points bill

Click on one of the choices:

(A) I would like to submit written testimony; or

(B) I would like my position noted for the legislative record.

Note position is: PRO

Write a lovely note about why this bill matters to you OR just note that you are a PRO vote.

And you're done. Feel good about your work to help change laws that directly impact our juvenile and young adolescent clients! Let's keep rolling back the draconian laws of the "super predator" days. Your voice matters.