EMERGING SOLIDARITY

NEWSLETTER

EMERGING SOLIDARITY

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

-You will learn how to advocate for your loved one.

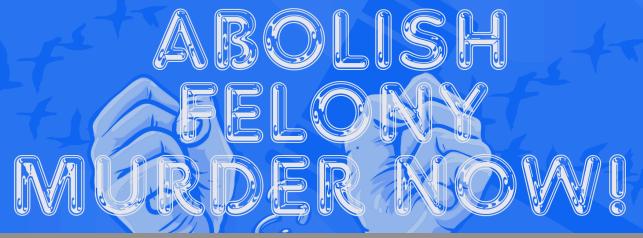
-You will read the stories of others enduring this sentence.

-You will also be notified and educated if changes and updates on legislation on Felony murder

END WRONGFUL CONVICTIONS END DBI

ABOLISH FELONY MURDER ARE ALL WAYS WE CAN MAKE PHILADELPHIA COMMUNITIES SAFER AND FAIR

Since 1989, approximately 3,500 wrongful convictions have been overturned in the United States, according to the National Registry of Exonerations. In Philadelphia alone, 77 exonerations have been recorded since 1990. Notably, 47 of these exonerations occurred after Larry Krasner assumed office as District Attorney in 2018, reflecting a significant increase in efforts to address wrongful convictions during his tenure.



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ADVOCATE FOR YOUR LOVED ONE'S FREEDOM & INNOCENCE

Advocating for a loved one's freedom due to a wrongful conviction of felony murder can be a challenging but important journey. Here are some steps you can take:

- 1. **Seek Legal Representation**: Engage an experienced attorney who specializes in wrongful convictions and criminal appeals. Organizations like the Innocence Project and the Exoneration Project provide free legal services to fight for the wrongfully convicted.
- 2. **Gather Evidence**: Collect all relevant evidence that supports your loved one's innocence. This can include witness statements, alibis, forensic evidence, and any new evidence that was not presented at the original trial.
- 3. **File a Motion for New Trial or Post-Conviction Relief**: Work with your attorney to file a motion for a new trial or post-conviction relief based on the new evidence or any constitutional violations that occurred during the original trial.
- 4. **Raise Public Awareness**: Use social media, local news outlets, and community organizations to raise awareness about your loved one's case. Public support can put pressure on the legal system and help garner attention from influential figures.
- 5. **Engage Advocacy Groups**: Reach out to nonprofit organizations and grassroots advocacy groups that fight against wrongful convictions. These groups can provide resources, support, and additional legal assistance.
- 6. **Appeal to Higher Courts**: If the initial motions are denied, consider appealing the decision to higher courts. The Pennsylvania Supreme Court, for example, has agreed to hear appeals in similar cases
- 7. **Stay Persistent**: Wrongful conviction cases can take years to resolve. Stay persistent and continue advocating for your loved one's freedom.

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Efforts to Abolish Mandatory Life Without Parole for Felony Murder in Pennsylvania

Several initiatives are currently underway to challenge and abolish mandatory life without parole (LWOP) sentences for felony murder in Pennsylvania. Here's a look at some key efforts:

Amicus Briefs

Organizations such as The Sentencing Project, the ACLU of Pennsylvania, and others have filed amicus briefs urging the Pennsylvania Supreme Court to declare the mandatory LWOP sentence unconstitutional.

The Amistad Law Project and the Abolitionist Law Center are dedicated to ending mass incarceration in Pennsylvania and are actively working towards abolishing mandatory LWOP for felony murder.

Media Commentary

An editorial by the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette has argued that the mandatory LWOP sentence is unjust and distorts the pursuit of justice.

Reasons Why Mandatory LWOP Is Considered Unjust

- **Defendant's Involvement**: The sentence does not consider the level of involvement, knowledge, or intent of the defendant. For instance, a person who merely assisted in hiding stole goods could face the same sentence as the individual who committed the murder.
- **Prosecutorial Tactics**: Prosecutors may use the threat of LWOP to coerce defendants into pleading guilty to charges that might be exaggerated or untrue.
 - **Cruelty**: Many argue that LWOP is an excessively harsh punishment for anyone, denying them any hope of eventual release.
 - Pennsylvania is one of only six states that mandates LWOP for all felony murder convictions. Currently, over 1,100 people are serving LWOP sentences in Pennsylvania, with 70% of them being Black individuals.

These efforts aim to bring more fairness and justice to the legal system by reevaluating the application of LWOP sentences



Pennsylvania's Life Without **Parole Crisis: A Tragic Reality**

Pennsylvania's record on life without parole sentences is among the most heartbreaking in the United States. Over 5,300 individuals are condemned to live out their days behind bars without the possibility of parole. Tragically, only Florida surpasses Pennsylvania in the sheer number of people serving life sentences. The despair is heavily concentrated in Philadelphia, where more than half of these sentences have been handed down.

The injustice is particularly stark for Black and Latinx communities, who face these harsh penalties at a disproportionately higher rate than the national average. In Pennsylvania, the systemic inequities are even more glaring and cruel. This situation not only reflects a failure of the justice system but also shatters families and communities, leaving countless lives in tatters.



The Injustice of Life Sentences: 1,100 Innocent Pennsylvanians Condemned to Die in Prison

THE INJUSTICE OF LIFE SENTENCES: 1,100 INNOCENT PENNSYLVANIANS CONDEMNED TO DIE IN PRISON

PENNSYLVANIA'S JUSTICE SYSTEM IS UNDER A HARSH SPOTLIGHT AS MORE THAN 1,100 PEOPLE ARE SERVING LIFE SENTENCES FOR CRIMES THEY DIDN'T COMMIT. THIS TRAGEDY UNFOLDS IN THE SHADOWY CORRIDORS OF THE STATE'S PRISONS, WHERE MEN AND WOMEN UNJUSTLY CONDEMNED TO "DEATH BY INCARCERATION" LANGUISH, THEIR CRIES FOR JUSTICE LARGELY UNHEARD.

THE STORIES BEHIND THE NUMBERS

EACH OF THESE 1,100 INDIVIDUALS HAS A STORY—A STORY OF DREAMS SHATTERED, FAMILIES TORN APART, AND LIVES IRREPARABLY DAMAGED. THESE ARE PEOPLE WHO WERE FATHERS, MOTHERS, SONS, DAUGHTERS, AND FRIENDS BEFORE THE GAVEL CAME DOWN, FOREVER ALTERING THEIR DESTINIES. MANY WERE CONVICTED BASED ON SHAKY EVIDENCE, COERCED CONFESSIONS, OR UNRELIABLE EYEWITNESS TESTIMONY, LEAVING INNOCENT LIVES CAUGHT IN THE CROSSFIRE OF A FLAWED SYSTEM.

"####SYSTEMIC FAILURES AND RACIAL DISPARITIES .

THE HARSH REALITY IS THAT PENNSYLVANIA'S USE OF LIFE WITHOUT PAROLE (LWOP) SENTENCES DISPROPORTIONATELY IMPACTS BLACK AND LATINX COMMUNITIES. THESE SENTENCES OFTEN STEM FROM SYSTEMIC BIASES AND AN OVER-RELIANCE ON PUNITIVE MEASURES THAT DO NOT ACCOUNT FOR THE NUANCES OF INDIVIDUAL CASES. IN PENNSYLVANIA, THE RATE OF LWOP SENTENCES HANDED DOWN TO THESE COMMUNITIES IS NOTABLY HIGHER THAN THE NATIONAL AVERAGE, REFLECTING DEEP-SEATED INEQUITIES.

####THECALLFORREFORM

THE MOVEMENT TO ABOLISH LIFE WITHOUT PAROLES ENTENCES FOR NON-VIOLENT OFFENDERS, PARTICULARLY THOSE WRONGFULLY CONVICTED, IS GAINING MOMENTUM. ADVOCACY GROUPS, LEGAL EXPERTS, AND CONCERNED CITIZENS ARE CALLING FOR COMPREHENSIVE REFORMS THAT ADDRESS THESE MISCARRIAGES OF JUSTICE, SOME KEY ACTIONS INCLUDE:

1. LEGISLATIVE CHANGE PUSHIFOR LAWS THAT PROVIDE AVENUES FOR RE-SENTENCING AND PAROLE ELIGIBILITY FOR THOSE WRONG FULLY CONVICTED. REFORMS SHOULD INCLUDE A REEVALUATION OF MANDATORY MINIMUM SENTENCES THAT ELIMINATE THE POSSIBILITY OF PAROLE.

2."LEGALSUPPORITANDADVOOAOY"SUPPORITORGANIZATIONSLIKETHEINNOCENCEPROJECT AND THE ABOLITIONIST LAW CENTIER, WHICH WORK THRE LESSLY TO OVERTURN WRONGFUL CONVICTIONS AND OFFER LEGAL REPRESENTATION TO THOSE IN NIEED.

© "PUBLICAWARENESS CAMPAIGNS" RAISEAWARENESSTIL ROUGHMEDIA, SOCIAL PLATIFORMS, AND PUBLIC DEMONSTRATIONS, HIGHLIGHTING INDIMIDUAL STORIES AND THE BROADER IMPACT OF WRONG FULCONMOTIONS CANGALVANIZE PUBLIC SUPPORT AND PRESSURE LAWMAKERS TO ACT.

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IT IS NOW INTRODUCED AS PA HB 443

INTRODUCED ON FEBRUARY 3RD 2025

SPONSORS

BRIGGS, HOWARD, SANCHEZ, KINKEAD, HILL-EVANS, WEBSTER, KHAN, GIRAL, KENYATTA, CERRATO, CEPEDA-FREYTIZ, PIELLI, MAYES, GUENST, HOHENSTEIN, DONAHUE, D. WILLIAMS, BOYD, GREEN AND SMITH-WADE-EL

PASS PAHB 443



Memo drafted and circulated by Senator Street and Senator Bartolotta

In the near future, we will introduce legislation that will reform sentencing for individuals convicted of Second-Degree Murder, also known as felony murder, in Pennsylvania.

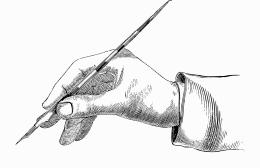
Felony murder applies when a person is involved in a felony that results in a death—even if they did not kill or intend to kill. Under current law, those convicted automatically receive life without parole, regardless of their level of involvement. Pennsylvania is one of only two states that still mandates this extreme sentence.

More than 1,100 people are currently serving life sentences for felony murder in Pennsylvania. Nearly half are over 50 years old, many having served decades in prison. The rigid sentencing structure denies any consideration of rehabilitation, change, or individual circumstances. It disproportionately impacts communities of color and contributes to excessive incarceration without improving public safety.

Our legislation would allow parole eligibility after 25 years, giving the justice system discretion to assess cases individually. This approach aligns Pennsylvania with the majority of states, reflects broad public support—79% of Pennsylvanians favor judicial discretion in these cases—and ensures sentencing policies uphold both justice and the opportunity for redemption.

Please join us in co-sponsoring this vital legislation to create a fairer justice system that recognizes rehabilitation and second chances while maintaining accountability

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EDITOR'S NOTE:

We hope that you have gained some valuable information and a sense of empowerment from our website and newsletter. Our mission is to advocate for freedom and to educate our loved ones on how to do the same. We invite you to fully utilize our site, and if you have any questions, please feel free to reach out via our website chat. Our site administrator will get back to you at their earliest convenience. Stay Empowered!

-EMERGING SOLIDARITY

Use will always fight for our loved one and yours as well.



