

I am writing to express my support for HF 1300.

At 17, I was initially booked for 2nd degree murder. My family was able to afford a lawyer and a plea bargain was offered for a lower charge and a sentence under Extended Juvenile Jurisdiction.

I was able to go on to complete my obligations to the state, earn a bachelor's degree and be a contributing member of society. We are all missing out by destroying young lives instead of the opportunity to shape young minds in a healthy direction.

I personally knew many other kids who were not bad people but had committed serious crimes and had no chance at fair representation. They are now serving life in prison. I have personally heard the former Hennepin County prosecuting attorney (between court being in session), telling a public defender fresh out of law school representing 40 people in a matter of a few hours that she will never allow bail for anyone who qualifies for a public defender. It is clear to me our justice system needs to be pushed towards a more fair and just system.

What I experienced and witnessed on frequent occasions while incarcerated, was nothing short of state sanctioned torture or at best a system that turns a blind eye. Far more violent than my crime and in some cases with the same outcome. To subject children (or anyone) to a lifetime of that is inhumane and a loose-loose for all involved. The only benefactors are those looking for a "tough on crime" reputation and/or have a contract with the state.

In MN, the current 97 life sentences being served by those who were juveniles at the time will cost taxpayers an estimated \$242,500,000 million to incarcerate them for their life sentences. This is absurd.

Severe crimes are difficult issues to decide on, but it is blatantly clear that our society is no better for participating in this regressive practice of handing out life sentences to juveniles. HF 1300 is an opportunity to mitigate some of the harm being done. Not just to our youth who desperately need actual rehabilitation and support systems, but to the harm that results to our communities at large as well.

Good can come from bad situations if the opportunity is provided. Please give HF 1300 a chance to be a step in the right direction.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

*Michael D. LeMay*  
-Michael D. LeMay