

## Written Testimony

Thaisan Nguon  
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RE: HF 1300

To the Honorable Minnesota Conference Committee:

My name is Thaisan Nguon and I am a member of the National Life Without Parole Leadership Council. I am writing in support of including HF 1300 in the Public Safety Omnibus bill.

I served a sentence of life without parole (LWOP) for twenty years and was given a second chance through a rare action of a sentence commutation by a governor. I have been home for two years now.

Since my release and coming home, I have been given the opportunity to give back to the communities I harmed so long ago with my poor judgment and destructive behavior. I am able to continue my supportive work with [pawsforlifek9rescue.org](http://pawsforlifek9rescue.org), a non-profit organization committed to rescuing abused and abandoned dogs by putting them in the care of currently incarcerated people. Working with Neutral Ground, a non-profit organization working with at-risk youths to provide them with the support, love, and resources they might be lacking in their everyday lives. I also volunteer with Cambodia Town, Inc., working on the annual Cambodian New Year parade that occurs annually in Long Beach, California. I served my alma mater, California State University, Los Angeles, during the pandemic by working to support testing and vaccination at sites on campus. For the past year and a half, I have been working full time for a financial and insurance agent as her Transfer Coordinator, helping clients secure and grow their retirement funds. I am grateful to be able to contribute and serve our broader society in these ways, and it would not be possible if I was still serving an LWOP sentence. I changed my life, and was able to do so in part because of the efforts of hundreds of other currently incarcerated people serving LWOP who mentored me while in prison.

I stand on the shoulders of the men who guided and counseled me through my process of transformation. I am the product of those who were well on their own path of transformation and thought good of encouraging and uplifting others around them. I believe that people have the awesome capacity to change for the better and HOPE is the greatest factor in facilitating that change.

When society sentences people to life without parole we are stripping away any hope they might have to redeem themselves, or make amends for the harm they have caused. When I was sentenced to LWOP, I knew I was sentenced to die by incarceration, and for a long time, I behaved in prison like a person with nothing to live for. I passed on that corrosive negativity unto others and created a destructive ripple effect throughout the prison community, which eventually led back to the broader society.

To stop this destructive cycle from continuing, I am asking that you include HF 1300 in the Public Safety Omnibus bills, which would establish eligibility for release for juveniles sentenced to life in prison for crimes committed while under the age of 18.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Thaisan Nguon".

Thaisan Nguon  
National LWOP Leadership Council member