



OFFICE OF THE RAMSEY COUNTY ATTORNEY

John J. Choi

March 14, 2023

Senator Ron Latz
Minnesota Senate Bldg., Room 3105
95 University Avenue W.
St. Paul, MN 55155

Representative Sandra Feist
409 State Office Building
100 Rev Dr Martin Luther King Jr Boulevard
St. Paul, MN 55155

RE: *Support for Senate File 1325 and House File 1300 - Revising Juvenile Life Without Parole Statutes*

Dear Senator Latz and Representative Feist,

Thank you for your leadership on Senate File 1325 and House File 1300, legislation which provides needed safeguards in making our juvenile life without parole statutes constitutional; appropriately gives due consideration to brain development at the time the crime occurred; keeps rehabilitation at the center of our corrections response for this population; and continues to hold youth who have committed very serious crimes accountable.

As you know, in 2012, the U.S. Supreme Court in *Miller v. Alabama* held that because children are neurologically different from adults, they cannot be subject to a mandatory life sentence without the possibility of release. Minnesota is one of the few states yet to revise our relevant statutes in line with the *Miller* ruling.

Your bills make Minnesota's statutes constitutional by giving Minnesota youth sentenced to life in prison a chance to have their sentences reviewed for possible release after they have served 15 years in prison. This is a review and by no means a guaranteed release. A critical component of this is that the review includes important safeguards, particularly ensuring victims' voices are heard – the release board must make reasonable efforts to notify victims of the release review hearing, and the board must consider victim input when making a decision.

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I support these bills and also respectfully request that both of you continue to have conversations with the Minnesota County Attorneys Association about this legislation, as I am a member and want this legislation to pass with their support for this new procedure and its implementation.

Sincerely,

John J. Choi
Ramsey County Attorney