

SECOND REGULAR SESSION

HOUSE BILL NO. 2322

103RD GENERAL ASSEMBLY

INTRODUCED BY REPRESENTATIVE LUCAS.

4953H.01I

JOSEPH ENGLER, Chief Clerk

AN ACT

To amend chapter 557, RSMo, by adding thereto one new section relating to sentencing of offenders under twenty years of age.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the state of Missouri, as follows:

Section A. Chapter 557, RSMo, is amended by adding thereto one new section, to be known as section 557.052, to read as follows:

557.052. 1. This section shall be known and may be cited as the "Youthful Offender Sentencing Reform and Accountability Act".

2. As used in this section, the following terms mean:

(1) "Exceptional circumstances", cases involving multiple victims, acts of extreme cruelty, or evidence of adult-level planning or premeditation;

(2) "Life without parole", a sentence that precludes eligibility for release on parole during the natural life of the person;

(3) "Offender under twenty", any individual who was under twenty years of age at the time of the commission of the offense.

3. (1) A court shall not impose a sentence of life imprisonment without the possibility of parole on an offender under twenty years of age except upon a finding, supported by clear and convincing evidence, that exceptional circumstances exist.

(2) In all other cases, such offender shall be eligible for parole consideration after serving not more than twenty-five years of confinement unless a shorter period is provided by law.

(3) The sentencing court shall consider factors of youth, maturity, background, and rehabilitation potential when determining the appropriate sentence.

EXPLANATION — Matter enclosed in bold-faced brackets **[thus]** in the above bill is not enacted and is intended to be omitted from the law. Matter in **bold-face** type in the above bill is proposed language.

18 **(4) Victims and their families shall be notified of and permitted to participate in**
19 **all parole hearings and related proceedings.**

20 **4. (1) This section shall apply retroactively to sentences imposed before, on, or**
21 **after August 28, 2026, except if the court determines that retroactive application would**
22 **result in manifest injustice.**

23 **(2) Any offender under twenty years of age currently serving a sentence of life**
24 **without parole shall be eligible for a parole review hearing not later than two years after**
25 **August 28, 2026.**

26 **(3) The parole board shall provide timely notification to victims or next of kin**
27 **and shall allow them to submit testimony or written statements regarding parole**
28 **eligibility.**

29 **5. In considering parole under this section, the board shall evaluate, among**
30 **other relevant evidence:**

31 **(1) Demonstrated remorse and accountability;**

32 **(2) Educational or vocational achievement;**

33 **(3) Participation in rehabilitative or therapeutic programs;**

34 **(4) Institutional conduct and disciplinary record;**

35 **(5) Psychological and risk-assessment evaluations;**

36 **(6) Input and testimony from victims or their representatives; and**

37 **(7) Evidence of maturity, stability, and readiness for reintegration into society.**

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