

HB 2322 -- SENTENCING OF OFFENDERS UNDER TWENTY YEARS OF AGE

SPONSOR: Lucas

This bill creates the "Youthful Offender Sentencing Reform and Accountability Act", which specifies that a court will not sentence an offender under 20 years old to life imprisonment without the possibility of parole unless there is clear and convincing evidence that exceptional circumstances are present. Absent exceptional circumstances, offenders under 20 years old will be eligible for parole consideration after serving a maximum of 25 years.

These provisions will apply retrospectively unless the court determines that retrospective application would result in manifest injustice. An offender currently serving a sentence of life without parole will be eligible for a parole hearing no more than two years after the effective date of the legislation. The Parole Board must provide timely notification to victims or next of kin and must allow them to submit testimony or written statements regarding parole eligibility. The bill establishes what the Parole Board must consider when evaluating whether to grant parole.