



GOVERNOR'S JUVENILE JUSTICE COMMISSION

TONY EVERS, GOVERNOR
JENNIFER GINSBURG, CHAIR

To: Members of the Wisconsin Legislature
From: Governor's Juvenile Justice Commission
Re: Support SB862 and AB856, relating to sentencing for crimes committed by a person who is under the age of 18.
Date: February 9, 2022

The Governor's Juvenile Justice Commission (GJJC) supports companion bills, Assembly Bill 856 and Senate Bill 862, relating to sentencing for crimes committed by a person who is under the age of 18.

The proposed legislation takes up policies the GJJC recommended to incorporate into the 2020 Legislative Interim Research Report on Criminal Sentencing of Juvenile Offenders. As this legislation moves forward, the GJJC reiterates its support of the following recommendations as related to the proposed bills:

Changes to current law related to life sentences imposed on juveniles in the past.

The creation of a new sentence adjustment procedure is recommended for juveniles currently serving life sentences who committed crimes before turning 18, and who have served at least 15 years of their sentences.

Changes to current law related to life sentences imposed on juveniles going forward.

The GJJC supports prohibiting courts from imposing a life sentence, without eligibility for release, on juveniles who commit crimes before turning 18. The GJJC supports the shift towards requiring courts to set a date in which juvenile would be eligible for release to extended supervision.

While other reforms are needed and worthy of attention to provide all youth with the opportunity for accountability and the tools to be successful, the GJJC would like to highlight this legislation that is before the legislature. These changes would be an important step towards reforming the Juvenile Justice Code to reflect current best practice, social science, and hard science relating to adolescent development.

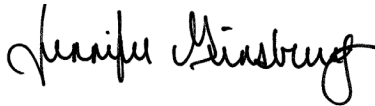
The GJJC was re-created by Executive Order #43 on September 3, 2019. The GJJC serves as the State Advisory Group (SAG) to the Governor and the Legislature on matters critical to juvenile justice, under the federal Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act (JJDP). The GJJC is comprised of juvenile justice professionals, including law enforcement, corrections professionals, attorneys, judges, mental health practitioners, and members of non-profit organizations dedicated

to improving outcomes for youth. The GJJC also includes justice involved youth members and individuals with lived experience within the juvenile justice system.

We welcome future opportunities to partner with the Governor, Legislature, and other state agencies to guide the large-scale and critical changes necessary to serve youth, families, and communities in an equitable, racially-just, and evidence-informed manner.

Thank you for your time and consideration to support SB862 and AB856.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Jennifer Ginsburg". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Jennifer" and last name "Ginsburg" clearly legible.

Jennifer Ginsburg
Governor's Juvenile Justice Commission, Chair

cc: Governor Tony Evers
Governor's Juvenile Justice Commission