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Safe & Just
Michigan

Senate Committee OKs Bill to Save Money, Cut Prison Population

Objective parole bill moves to Senate floor for full vote of the chamber

LANSING — A bill that would reunite families, reduce Michigan’s budget by \$40 million over five years and shrink Michigan’s prison population by as many as 2,400 people is one step closer to becoming law after being approved by the Michigan Senate Judiciary Committee today. The bill passed by a vote of 3 to 0 with 1 not voting. Senators **Rick Jones** (R-Grand Ledge), **Judy Emmons** (R-Sheridan) and **Steven Bieda** (D-Warren) supported the bill. Safe & Just Michigan has been a strong proponent of this bill since its introduction in January.

The vote came after committee Chairman Sen. Jones read the names of supporters who submitted cards showing their support. They included 42 North Partners LLC, the ACLU of Michigan, the Alliance for Safety and Justice, Business Leaders for Michigan, Detroit Regional Chamber of Commerce, Grand Rapids Chamber of Commerce, Michigan Catholic Conference, Michigan Faith in Action, Michigan League for Public Policy, Saginaw City Chamber of Commerce, Still Standing and Talent 2025. The Prosecuting Attorneys Association of Michigan were neutral on the bill.

House Bill 5377, also known as the objective parole bill, now moves to the floor of the Senate, where it could be taken up for a final vote as early as later this week.

“The objective parole bill will return low-risk incarcerated people to their communities after they’ve served their minimum sentence, while ensuring the parole board retains their authority to deny parole based on legitimate safety concerns,” said **John Cooper**, associate director of policy and research for Safe & Just Michigan. “This is smart criminal justice policy: when you return people back to their communities, you get them back to their families, back to work and back into the tax base. It makes the community stronger for everyone.”

The Michigan House of Representatives approved HB 5377 by a vote of 97-10 in May. It continues to enjoy strong bipartisan support and is backed by a broad range of organizations, including business leaders, faith organizations, organizations lead by crime survivors and policy groups on both the left and the right side of the political spectrum.

“We’re thankful to Sen. Jones for bringing this bill up for a vote today, which puts this legislation on track to getting approved by the Senate and enacted before the 2017-18 legislative session ends in December,” Cooper said. “At a time when there is so much partisan division, it’s heartening to see people coming together to work on legislation that will strengthen our communities and make Michigan a safer place to live for all of us.”

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Safe & Just Michigan (www.safeandjustmi.org) works to advance policies that end Michigan’s over-use of incarceration and promote community safety and healing. We partner with Michigan organizations and leaders from across the political spectrum, including business and community leaders, faith communities, crime survivor organizations, formerly incarcerated individuals, prisoners and their families, as well as Michigan taxpayers statewide.