

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Safe & Just
Michigan

Statement from Safe & Just Michigan Executive Director John S. Cooper on the Introduction of Bills to end Juvenile Life Without Parole:

“Safe & Just Michigan applauds the bipartisan group of legislators who introduced bills in both chambers that would end the practice of sentencing juveniles to die in prison. We urge the Legislature to act with urgency on these bills — dozens of juvenile lifers are still waiting to be resentenced more than a decade after their sentences were declared unconstitutional in *Miller v. Alabama*. The State of Michigan continues to pay for both sides of resentencing litigation even as the Michigan Supreme Court extended *Miller* in multiple ways this past summer.

Ending juvenile life without parole sentences will bring Michigan in line with 26 other states — from West Virginia to Texas to California — and show that Michigan believes in second chances, especially for children. Holding open the possibility for a young person to redeem themselves and rejoin society incorporates the most recent evidence-based findings in brain development and would bring our state’s laws in line with recent U.S. and state Supreme Court rulings. We urge our state Legislature to move quickly to pass these bills into law.”

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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.