

# The Sentencing Project

## Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

<https://www.sentencingproject.org/stories/james-inge/>

### Public Facing Advocacy Writing

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Inge launched a recent campaign to change Pennsylvanias parole law with help from Andrea Braxton, a childhood friend. Having support from the outside motivated Inge to advocate for reform and when obstacles arise, Braxtons help keeps him going. Inge says Braxton motivated him to start fighting to get out of prison. **Before that visit, I had given up all hope of getting out of prison alive.**

Inges activism led him to propose a change in the parole review process. He has asked the Pennsylvania Commission on Sentencing to allow rehabilitated seniors 65 or older who are serving a life sentence and have completed at least 35 years of that sentence, or who have reached the age of 60 and have served at least 40 years of that sentence the chance to petition the Pennsylvania Board of Probation and Parole for release consideration.

Individuals sentenced to life without parole receive no parole review, regardless of rehabilitation while incarcerated. Inge hopes that gaining support from the Commission will lead to a recommendation to the General Assembly for a modification and improvement in Pennsylvanias parole laws. The General Assembly could then draft legislation based upon his proposal which one day could become law if approved by the legislature and governor.

Inge and Braxton have engaged in significant outreach in order to garner support and attention for his proposal. Ingehas submitted letters to the editor on this topic that were published by five Pennsylvania papers and *USA Today*, and has also been in touch with state lawmakers about how to advance his goals. The Sentencing Project is working with Inge and Braxton to promote their advocacy efforts, and the Philadelphia branch of the NAACP isalso considering supporting the proposal. In addition, Braxton hastested before the Pennsylvania General Assemblys Judiciary Committee and the Pennsylvania Commission on Sentencing.

State Representative Jason Dawkins has introduced HB 135, which would allow individuals sentenced to life to petition for parole review after 15 years. Inge hopes that if Representative Dawkins legislation is not enacted the legislature will consider his proposal as an alternative.

Once Inge has enough support for his proposal from the outside, he will consider creating a coalition of elderly lifers advocating for his proposal.

People in prison is serving a life sentence

Sentencing Policy

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