



October 30, 2024

Rep. Joe Tate, Speaker of the House of Michigan Representatives  
P.O. Box 30014  
Lansing, MI 48909-7514

Dear Speaker Tate:

The League of Women Voters of Michigan supports passage of HB 4556-4560 Second Look Legislation, the criminal procedure bills that allows people serving very long sentences to petition their sentencing court to request a sentence reduction. The legislation would empower circuit court judges to review the facts of the case and combine that information with everything the person has done since the crime to determine whether the sentence can be reduced. The Parole Board will continue to have the power to decide whether the person can be safely released.

The League believes that the state's criminal justice system should utilize principles of justice to repair the harm, provide action to reduce recidivism and dismantle racism by eliminating unnecessary prison time contributing to mass incarceration. Michigan has extremely long prison sentences with over 41% of the prison population spending more than 10 years before parole eligibility. These are among the longest and most punitive sentences in our country. In addition, Michigan prisons are seriously understaffed. These bills will provide for the safe release of those who deserve to be returned to our society to lead productive lives.

We urge you to support HB 4556-4560 and to bring these bills forward for a vote to begin the necessary criminal justice reform grounded in constitutional principles of fairness and equity.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paula Bowman".

Paula Bowman, Co-President

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Denise Hartsough".

Denise Hartsough, Co-President