

January 20, 2025

Senator Larson and Judiciary Committee,

I am writing to express my opposition to SB2128. Statistics have shown that there is less inmate recidivism when inmates are involved in programs that provide behavior modification treatment or training. Bringing inmates back from transitional placements will have a very negative outcome. Transitional programs and behavior modification programs such as Restoring Promise motivate inmates to make personal behavioral improvements and provide coping mechanisms to help inmates not to re-offend when they are released.

Forcing inmates to serve 85% of their sentence without any chance of having their sentence commuted will only cause additional disruptive and uncooperative behavior from inmates who would otherwise serve their time without causing trouble.

My son was sentenced to serve 85% of a 30-year sentence. He has less than five years left to meet the 85% requirement. For twenty-one years, Zach has been cooperative and taken advantage of the programs that I've already mentioned, but most importantly, he is determined to be a positive influence to the younger inmates with upcoming release dates. Zach is a mentor for the Restoring Promise program. If you check NDSP statistics, there is a lower incidence of inmates reoffending after being part of this program.

I mention all of this because for over twenty one years, Zach has held on to the hope that each time that he was eligible to go before the pardon board, they might take into consideration reducing Zach's sentence because Zach has been a model prisoner and made a difference with his mentees and other inmates that he has contact with.

If SB2128 were to become law, it would take away any motivation for an inmate to better themselves and would only contribute to behavior problems within the inmate population.

Mr. Gail L. Schmidkunz
Minot ND