

MEDIA ALERT

For more information:

Alissa Rivera
arivera@restorejustice.org

Restore Justice Applauds Illinois Legislature for Passing Historic Criminal Law Reforms

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Restore Justice Illinois applauds the Illinois Legislature for **sending historic criminal legal changes to Governor JB Pritzker's desk**. If signed into law, [House Bill 3653](#), [Senate Amendment 2](#), would amend Illinois's felony-murder law, require police officers to wear body cameras, eliminate cash bail, end prison gerrymandering, and require the Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC) to provide information about deaths in custody, among other provisions.

The Illinois Legislative Black Caucus crafted the bill, which includes proposals that have been debated and made progress in previous sessions, many of which were moving through the process as separate bills before COVID-19 stalled the 101st General Assembly in March 2020. Thank you to Illinois Senate Criminal Law Committee Chairman Elgie Sims (D-Chicago), Senator Robert Peters (D-Chicago), and Representative Justin Slaughter (D-Chicago) for continuing to hold hearings, listening to testimony, and negotiating with stakeholders while the session was paused due to the pandemic.

While the Legislature still has much work to do to roll back decades of ineffective and often inhumane policies and practices, the new law will address some of the most devastating, racially unjust practices that have plagued communities for decades.

[Felony-murder reform](#) is one of Restore Justice's core issues. [Read our testimony](#) from last week's Senate Executive Committee. Until this newly passed proposal becomes law, Illinois has one of the broadest felony murder-statutes in the country. Some states don't have felony-murder laws. The majority of states that do have felony-murder laws only hold people accountable for deaths they or their co-defendants cause. HB3653, SA2 will move Illinois into that category.

Last week, in Galesburg, prosecutors charged [two 17-year-old boys with the death of their friend](#). The teenagers allegedly tried to break into a store, and the store owner shot and killed one of them. Charging the other boys with felony-murder (which is first-degree

murder and carries a minimum sentence of 20 years) is a cruel overreach. The criminal law omnibus will prevent such charges. **The legislation, when signed into law, will ensure someone is truly culpable for murder if they are to be given our state's harshest possible punishment.**

Governor JB Pritzker has expressed support for the elements of this bill. Please [send him an email](#), [call his office](#), or [tweet at him](#) and ask him to sign this bill.

Restore Justice, which comprises [Restore Justice Foundation](#) and [Restore Justice Illinois](#), works to address issues faced by those serving life or de-facto life sentences, their families, and their communities. Founded in 2015 by a dedicated group of advocates that included the late former Congressman, Federal Judge, and White House Counsel Abner Mikva, Restore Justice trains and supports advocates, conducts research, nurtures partnerships, and develops policy solutions that will roll back ineffective “tough on crime” policies of the past, replacing them with compassionate, smart, and safe policies for the future.