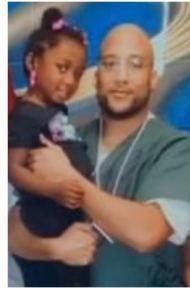


Wisconsin Needs Second Chances for Incarcerated Citizens Like These

**Individuals still serving extreme sentences for crimes as teens and young adults,
despite clear evidence of their rehabilitation**

Andrae Bridges, convicted at 16, now 48, but not eligible for parole until 2037. In college program for bachelor's degree in Theology. Job skills as a welder, CNC machine operator, community service worker. Mentors younger prisoners. Excellent conduct and work record for years. Wife and support network ready to assist with his re-entry.

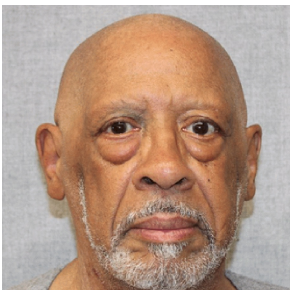
James (Shareef) Williams, convicted at 16, now 48, not eligible for parole until 2098! Currently learning computer drafting in a mechanical design program. Job skills as a janitor, food service and maintenance worker, math tutor. Clean and sober for 20+ years. Crochets for charity, Islamic teacher and speaker. Excellent conduct and work history for years. Wants to become a peer-support specialist. Strong support network ready to assist with his re-entry.



Israel Saldaña, convicted at 23, now 53, but not eligible for parole until 2040. Determined to keep learning (just completed one educational program and is beginning another). Job skills as a janitor, food service worker, ESL and literacy tutor. Excellent conduct record for years. Wants to tutor and mentor youth after release. Has job offers and many supporters awaiting him in Racine.

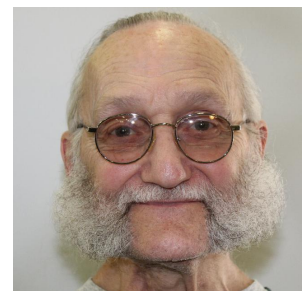
Michael Maldonado, convicted at 16, now 45, but not eligible for parole until 2044. Trained as a CNC operator; in college for associate's degrees in business management and theological studies. Volunteer work with troubled youth, tutoring, training service dogs. Excellent conduct record for years. Family and other supporters ready to assist with his re-entry.

Individuals who have grown old in prison and no longer pose any risk to public safety



Carmen Cooper, convicted in 1993; now 79, confined to a wheelchair and suffering intolerable pain from spinal degeneration. Well-documented need for surgery that the DOC is incapable of providing. His daughters have repeatedly begged the governor to grant him a Compassionate Release so that they can get him the medical care he needs.

Ron Schilling, convicted in 1976, now 73. Became parole-eligible many decades ago and has been reviewed for parole 50 times. Since he fulfilled every condition set by his sentencing judge long ago, he has come close to release on several occasions. But something keeps getting in the way – reportedly, the opposition of influential relatives of his victim.



Some FAQs about long prison sentences, rehabilitation, and second chances

How long a sentence is fair and reasonable for a serious crime? The Sentencing Project recommends a 20-year maximum, which is the norm in most other countries, for nearly all cases. The Vera Institute of Justice argues that 15 years is long enough for anyone who was under 25 (and thus still immature, with faulty reasoning and impulse control) at the time of the crime. The Model Penal Code of the American Law Institute has suggested that long sentences should be reviewed “for resentencing or release” after 15 years. The American Bar Association has urged that all cases be given “second look” re-sentencing after 10 years.

Why shouldn't someone who committed a violent crime be locked up for life? The basic answer is that people can and do change as they mature. A person who committed a violent robbery or murder at 20 is likely to be a very different person by age 40. (In fact, research consistently shows that the likelihood of criminal behavior drops with every decade of age.) If they have used their time behind bars to become a good, responsible citizen, does it make any sense to keep punishing them at taxpayer expense for the sins of the person they used to be?

What are we asking Wisconsin legislators to do?

- Abolish life sentences for teens and young adults, whose brains have not yet matured, and make it possible to take a second look at those currently serving such sentences.
- Create a Commutation Board (like the Pardon Board) to consider shortening the remaining sentences of incarcerated men and women who have already proved their rehabilitation and readiness for release.
- Streamline the process for Compassionate Release so that the oldest and sickest people in our prisons can be released to the care of their families.

By releasing individuals who no longer pose a threat to society (if they ever did), what goals can Wisconsin fulfill?

- Reduce the stress on families separated too long from their incarcerated loved ones,
- Add the talents and skills of formerly incarcerated people to the state workforce,
- Wherever possible, let them work long enough to earn Social Security for their old age,
- Enable them to use their experience to mentor younger people in their communities,
- Demonstrate that we genuinely believe in the values of justice and mercy taught by our religious traditions,
- Help to reduce the prison population and close the oldest prisons, and avoid the need to build a new one,
- Reinvest the saved money in programs to strengthen our communities and prevent future crimes (education, child care, treatment for mental illness and substance abuse, etc.)