

Human Rights Watch Student Task Force
11500 W. Olympic Blvd #441
Los Angeles, CA 90064

The Honorable Julia Brownley
California State Assembly Member
P.O. Box 942849
Sacramento, CA 95814

Support for SB 399 – The Fair Sentencing for Youth Act

Dear Assembly Member Brownley:

I am a constituent and I support the Fair Sentencing for Youth Act, SB 399. I urge you to vote for it. As a student at Crossroads School, I believe California should uphold human rights in its laws and that means young people should be treated differently than adults in the criminal system.

In California, youth under the age of 18 years old are sentenced to life in prison without the possibility of parole. They will spend the rest of their lives in prison. Senate Bill 399 provides review of these cases after a youth offender has served a substantial amount of time in prison. It is an important piece of legislation because it protects public safety while at the same time recognizing that youth are different from adults. SB 399 holds youth accountable but also provides a chance for young offenders to prove they have changed.

Sentencing adolescents to life without parole is out of step with the rest of the world. The United States is the only country in the world that imposes life without parole on youth under the age of 18. Nationally there are over 2,500 cases of youth sentenced to life without parole; here in California, there are at least 250. In the rest of the world, there are none. This extreme punishment is a violation of international law and fundamental human rights.

I urge your support for this important legislation. Please vote yes for SB 399.

Sincerely,

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Letters of Support to Assembly Member Brownley for SB 399

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