

**COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
TUESDAY, AUGUST 26, 2025**

MINUTE ORDER NO. 28

SUBJECT: PROTECTING CHILDREN FROM SEXUAL ABUSE: SUPPORTING SENATE BILL 286 (MARY BELLA’S LAW) AND ASSEMBLY BILL 47 (DISTRICTS: ALL)

OVERVIEW

Public safety is the most fundamental responsibility of government. Yet under current California law, individuals convicted of the most egregious violent sex crimes, including the rape and molestation of children, can become eligible for parole simply because they have turned 50 years old and served 20 years of their sentence. This arbitrary standard ignores the lifelong trauma inflicted on victims, fails to reflect the severity of these offenses, and undermines public trust in the justice system.

State Senate Bill 286 (SB 286), also known as Mary Bella’s Law authored by Senator Brian Jones, is a bipartisan effort to close this dangerous loophole in California’s Elderly Parole Program. SB 286 would ensure that violent sex offenders, including rapists and child molesters, are excluded from early parole eligibility under the reduced 50/20 threshold, keeping them ineligible regardless of age or time served.

Mary Bella’s Law is named after two survivors of horrific abuse, Mary Johnson and Bella Clark. Mary Johnson was sexually abused by her uncle, Cody Woodsen Klemp, who was found guilty and sentenced to 170 years in prison. Despite the seriousness of his crimes and the length of his sentence, Klemp became eligible for parole after just 29 years because of his age. Bella Clark was only five years old when she was kidnapped and sexually abused by Charles William Mix. Although Mix received a 350-year sentence, he became eligible for parole after only 20 years under current law.

These cases highlight the deep flaws in the existing system. Aging alone should never absolve the most violent offenders of the full consequences of their crimes. Victims and their families deserve the assurance that justice will be upheld throughout the entirety of the sentence.

Assembly Bill 47 (AB 47), authored by Assemblymember Stephanie Nguyen, takes a similar approach, addressing the same gap in the law by excluding violent sex offenders sentenced under the One Strike Law from being eligible for elderly parole prior to age 60 and before they have served at least 25 continuous years. While the two measures differ in how they address eligibility, both share the same essential goal: protecting the public by ensuring the worst offenders remain ineligible for early release.

By supporting SB 286 and AB 47, the County of San Diego would join a growing coalition of lawmakers, advocates, and community members committed to protecting victims, strengthening public safety, and ensuring the justice system reflects the severity of these crimes.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

SUPERVISOR JIM DESMOND AND DISTRICT ATTORNEY SUMMER STEPHAN

Direct the Chief Administrative Officer to express the County’s support for State Senate Bill 286 and Assembly Bill 47, consistent with Board Policy M-2.

EQUITY IMPACT STATEMENT

Current eligibility for elderly parole fails to consider the lifelong trauma, inequity, and injustice experienced by child sexual abuse survivors. Supporting SB 286 and AB 47 prioritizes victim safety and restores fairness in the justice system by closing a loophole that disproportionately affects vulnerable children and families.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT STATEMENT

The proposed action to support SB 286 and AB 47 would contribute to the County of San Diego Sustainability Goal of protecting health and wellbeing.

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no fiscal impact associated with these recommendations. There will be no change in net General Fund cost and no additional staff years.

BUSINESS IMPACT STATEMENT

N/A

ACTION:

ON MOTION of Supervisor Desmond, seconded by Supervisor Anderson, the Board of Supervisors took action as recommended.

AYES: Aguirre, Anderson, Lawson-Remer, Montgomery Steppe, Desmond

State of California)
County of San Diego) §

I hereby certify that the foregoing is a full, true and correct copy of the Original entered in the Minutes of the Board of Supervisors.

ANDREW POTTER
Clerk of the Board of Supervisors



Signed
by Andrew Potter