

Bill Summary: Expanding Elderly Parole HB 1545, Representative Allen

The bill: [House Bill \(HB\) 1545](#) would, if passed, revise the Missouri statute governing minimum prison terms for older people incarcerated in Missouri’s Department of Correction (MDOC). **FAMM supports this bill.**

Bill status: This bill was introduced by Representative Bill Allen and is pending.

What the bill would do: The bill would allow more incarcerated people who are considered “geriatric” by correctional standards to become eligible for parole consideration. Using a tier system based on age and time served, it would reduce existing felony sentence percentage requirements by about ten percent as follows:

- With one previous felony prison commitment, a person is eligible after serving 40 percent of their sentence or if they are *60 years of age and have served 20 percent of their sentence*.
- With two previous felony prison commitments, a person is eligible after serving 50 percent of their sentence or if they are *60 years of age and have served 30 percent of their sentence*.
- With three or more previous felony prison commitments, a person is eligible after serving 80 percent of their sentence or if they are *60 years of age and have served 30 percent of their sentence*.
- With a present commitment for a dangerous felony, a person is eligible after serving 85 percent of their sentence or if they are *60 years of age and have served 30 percent of their sentence*.

If a person becomes eligible for parole under this bill, the parole board does not have to grant parole. It is fully discretionary, and the board must consider all appropriate factors and circumstances. People with certain convictions do not qualify for parole eligibility under this bill, including those with first-degree homicide. [See bill for full list of eligible statutes](#) of conviction.

Why the bill is needed: It would taper the growth of the aging and costly prison population. Currently, there are over 5,600 people over the age of 60 that have been incarcerated for 15+ years in Missouri. The cost of housing, correctional staff, and medical care for aging people in prison is a huge burden on taxpayers, who do not see a return in safety for their investment. It is well known that people age out of crime,¹ and this bill would provide a safe, measured approach to parole consideration for the highest cost, lowest risk population.

For more information, contact FAMM’s Director of State Policy Maria Goellner at (717) 945-9089 or mgoellner@famm.org.

¹ J.J. Prescott, Benjamin Pyle & Sonja B. Starr, Understanding Violent-Crime Recidivism, 95 Notre Dame L. Rev. 1643 (2020). Available at: <https://scholarship.law.nd.edu/ndlr/vol95/iss4/9>