

State of Louisiana



BOBBY JINDAL
GOVERNOR

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OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

June 20, 2014

The Honorable Alfred Speer
Clerk of the House of Representatives
State Capitol
Baton Rouge, LA 70802

Re: House Bill No. 1255 by Representative Katrina Jackson

Dear Mr. Speer:

House Bill No. 1255 would allow criminals convicted of certain crimes of violence to become eligible for parole at a significantly earlier date and lower the bar for Parole Board approval for such parole. These crimes include: Solicitation for murder; Manslaughter; Aggravated battery; Second degree battery; Aggravated assault; Mingling harmful substances; Forcible rape; Intentional exposure to AIDS virus; Second degree kidnapping; Simple kidnapping; Aggravated arson; Aggravated criminal damage to property; Aggravated burglary; Simple robbery; Purse snatching; Extortion; Assault by drive-by shooting; Terrorism; Aggravated second degree battery; Aggravated assault upon a peace officer with a firearm; Aggravated assault with a firearm; Second degree robbery; Disarming of a peace officer; Stalking; Aggravated flight from an officer; Aggravated incest (with an adult); and Human trafficking (with an adult).

The expansion in parole eligibility authorized by this bill is outside the range used by many other states. Furthermore, the current unanimous vote requirement is an effort to best ensure that these types of offenders are qualified and prepared to re-enter into society under supervision. Reducing the vote requirement weakens the current mechanism in place designed to protect Louisiana citizens and reduce the risk of reoffending.

Louisiana has made many strides in sentencing reform over the last few years, prioritizing drug treatment for nonviolent, non sex offenders whose addiction is at the root of their offense, streamlining how good time is calculated to simplify and ensure accuracy, and accelerating parole eligibility for nonviolent, non sex offenders. Indeed, this year, I signed HB732 by Rep. Jackson, which extends the sentencing hinge to some crimes of violence that could occur without a violent act, and HB681 by Rep. Ledricka Thierry, which removes low level marijuana offenses from what is considered a violation of probation or parole. But to lower the bar for release of offenders who have committed violent crimes like Forcible Rape, Manslaughter, and Human Trafficking is a step too far that could put our citizens at risk. For these reasons, I have vetoed House Bill No. 1255 and hereby return it to the House.

Sincerely,

Bobby Jindal
Governor

