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Steve Marshall
Alabama Attorney General



Attorney General Steve Marshall Hails Alabama Senate Passage of Legislation to Reform State's Badly Broken Pardons and Paroles Board

(MONTGOMERY) – Attorney General Steve Marshall hailed the passage of legislation today by the Alabama Senate to reform the badly broken Alabama Board of Pardons and Paroles. House Bill 380, sponsored by Representative Connie Rowe, R-Jasper, passed the Senate by a vote of 25 to 5. The legislation was carried in the upper house by Senator Cam Ward, R-Alabaster. The Alabama House of Representatives passed the bill on May 9, by a vote of 73 to 27. It now goes to the Governor for her signature.

“The first civil right of every citizen is to be free from the fear of violence. The people of Alabama deserve the assurance that their criminal-justice system is operating in the best interest of public safety,” said Attorney General Marshall. “Today, the Alabama Legislature passed legislation that will reform our state’s badly broken system of pardons and paroles. But this was about far more than fixing a failing agency; this was about securing public safety. We will now be able to better protect the people of our great state.”

On Friday, Attorney General Marshall announced that the State of Alabama had settled with the families of Marie Martin, Colton Lee, and Martha Reliford, who were brutally murdered last year by Jimmy O’Neal Spencer – a violent offender, sentenced to life imprisonment, who was released from prison and improperly supervised by the Alabama Board of Pardons and Paroles.

Throughout the course of the debate, Attorney General Marshall has identified numerous other instances in which the Board has failed in its duties in recent years, underscoring the need for legislative change.

“For months, the Board has claimed that it was ‘under attack . . . by the Attorney General’ and that I was simply overreacting to one, isolated instance of ‘human error’ by advocating for this legislation, which the members of the Board and the agency’s executive director have stridently opposed. The Alabama Board of Pardons and Paroles needs fresh, new leadership. The status quo is no longer acceptable.”

“I applaud Representative Connie Rowe and Senator Cam Ward for their commitment to correcting this extremely important public-safety problem. I am grateful to the leadership of the House and Senate, and to all of those who voted for this bill throughout the legislative process. I greatly look forward to Governor Ivey signing this legislation into law.”

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