

[address]
January __, 2020

Representative _____
Stratton Bldg., #____
Springfield, IL 62706

Re: Please Support HB 1615 To Limit the Scope of Prosecution for Felony Murder

Dear Representative _____:

In Illinois a person can be charged and convicted of first-degree murder – a conviction that carries a minimum sentence of twenty years and a maximum sentence of natural life – even if they did not actually kill the victim or intend to commit the murder.

Youthful offenders are disproportionately impacted by the felony-murder rule, as they are more likely to act in groups and are more susceptible to peer pressure. According to research in California, women can also be disproportionately impacted.

Illinois has one of the broadest felony-murder statutes in the country. Only 19 states use a law similar to Illinois.

H.B. 1615 would bring Illinois into alignment with the majority of states that have a felony murder statute. This bill would:

- Ensure that only defendants that commit murder are actually charged with and found guilty of murder;
- Ensure that individuals who do not personally inflict an injury during the course of an underlying felony would not be charged with or found guilty of first-degree murder; and
- Ensure someone is truly culpable for murder if they are to be given our state's harshest possible punishment.

I urge you to join in co-sponsorship H.B. 1615. I look forward to your reply with your position on this legislation.

Sincerely,