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Statement on the Passing of the Comprehensive Youth Justice Amendment in Washington, D.C.

Fair and Just Prosecution Executive Director Miriam Krinsky issued the following statement today in response to the Washington, D.C. City Council's passing of the [Omnibus Public Safety and Justice Amendment Act of 2020](#), which contains the Comprehensive Youth Justice Amendment, allowing people who are incarcerated for crimes they committed before the age of 25 and have served at least 15 years in prison to petition for release:

“For decades, the United States criminal justice system has perpetuated decades-long sentences that fueled mass incarceration and have made us the world’s [largest](#) prison system. These practices have [ravaged](#) communities, resulted in billions of dollars spent on running prisons and jails, and trapped countless generations in [cycles of violence](#)—all [without](#) making us any safer. When Washington, D.C.’s City Council voted this week to give people who committed crimes as young adults and have already served long prison terms the chance to return to their community, they acknowledged that all people—and especially young people—have immense potential to grow and evolve.

Research tells us that the brains of young people continue to develop until around [age 25](#) and also that people age out of crime and can safely return to the community, especially after decades behind bars. Further, people who engage in violence have often been [victims](#) of violence or grown up [surrounded](#) by violence. And, we know that a history of violence does not indicate a future of violence: Not one of the [53 people](#) released under earlier versions of this law has been rearrested.

We commend the D.C. City Council for recognizing that justice requires us to acknowledge the human capacity for growth and the importance of second chances. We hope this policy will serve as a model for other jurisdictions dedicated to building a criminal justice system that promotes accountability and prioritizes rehabilitation.”

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Fair and Just Prosecution is a national network of elected prosecutors working towards common-sense, compassionate criminal justice reforms. To learn more about FJP’s work, visit our [website](#) and follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).