
A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO MINORS.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

1 SECTION 1. The legislature recognizes that because minors
2 are different from adults, these differences must be taken into
3 account when minors are sentenced after being convicted in the
4 same circuit courts in which adults are tried. As stated by the
5 Supreme Court of the United States in *Miller v. Alabama* 567 U.S.
6 460 (2012), "only a relatively small proportion of adolescents"
7 who engage in illegal activity "develop entrenched patterns of
8 problem behavior," and "developments in psychology and brain
9 science continue to show fundamental differences between
10 juvenile and adult minds," including "parts of the brain
11 involved in behavior control".

12 The legislature also finds that minors are more vulnerable
13 to negative influences and outside pressures from their family,
14 peers, and others. Minors also have limited control over their
15 environment and lack the ability to extricate themselves from
16 horrific and crime-producing settings. The *Miller* decision
17 noted that in *Roper v. Simmons*, 543 U.S. 551 (2005), and *Graham*



1 v. Florida 560 U.S. 48 (2010), the Supreme Court emphasized that
2 "the distinctive attributes of youth diminish the penological
3 justifications for imposing the harshest sentences on juvenile
4 offenders, even when they commit terrible crimes".

5 The legislature further acknowledges that the recent trend
6 in the United States has been to give greater discretion to
7 judges when sentencing minors, even allowing judges to depart
8 from mandatory minimums in appropriate cases.

9 The purpose of this Act is to grant a circuit court, when
10 sentencing a minor for a criminal offense, the discretion to:

11 (1) Impose a sentence that includes a period of
12 incarceration that is as much as fifty per cent
13 shorter than any mandatory minimum; and

14 (2) In certain cases, decline to impose a mandatory
15 enhanced sentence,

16 if the court believes that such a reduction is warranted in
17 light of the age of the defendant's age and prospects for
18 rehabilitation.

19 SECTION 2. Chapter 706, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
20 amended by adding a new section to be appropriately designated
21 and to read as follows:



1 "§706- Sentencing of minors. (1) In a case in which
2 the family court has waived jurisdiction over a minor pursuant
3 to section 571-22 and the minor is convicted of a criminal
4 offense in circuit court, the circuit court shall consider, in
5 addition to any other factor that the court is required to
6 consider, the differences between minor and adult offenders,
7 including the diminished culpability of minors as compared to
8 that of adults, and the typical characteristics of youth.

9 (2) Notwithstanding any law to the contrary, after
10 considering the factors set forth in subsection (1), the circuit
11 court, in its discretion:

12 (a) May impose a sentence that includes a period of
13 incarceration that is shorter than any mandatory
14 minimum otherwise required by law, provided that the
15 period of incarceration shall not be shorter than half
16 of the mandatory minimum otherwise required by law;
17 and

18 (b) When imposing any sentence that includes a period of
19 incarceration of five years or more, may decline to
20 impose a mandatory sentencing enhancement otherwise
21 required by law."



1 SECTION 3. This Act does not affect rights and duties that
2 matured, penalties that were incurred, and proceedings that were
3 begun before its effective date.

4 SECTION 4. New statutory material is underscored.

5 SECTION 5. This Act shall take effect on January 1, 2059.



Report Title:

Minors; Circuit Courts; Criminal Proceedings; Sentencing

Description:

Grants a circuit court, when sentencing a minor for a criminal offense, the discretion to: (1) impose a sentence that includes a period of incarceration that is as much as fifty per cent shorter than any mandatory minimum; and (2) in certain cases, decline to impose a mandatory enhanced sentence. (HB218 HD1)

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