A Decade of Quiet After a Parole Denial

After a first parole denial in the most serious violent cases, families get at least ten years before they must face another hearing.

90TH LEGISLATURE • PROPOSAL	GUIDING PRINCIPLES	CHAMPION SOUGHT
Amends Government Code §508.141 Status: draft — ready for an author	Help see perpetrators get the justice they deserve • Support victims through the criminal justice system	Author / co-author / endorser / testifier / adviser — whichever role your group can take

THE ASK We ask victims' advocacy organisations to **champion, endorse, testify for, or advise on** this bill — and members of the 90th Legislature to consider authoring it. No organisation is a supporter until it commits.

1 — THE PROBLEM VICTIMS FACE TODAY

When a parole panel denies release, it sets the next review — the "set-off." Today it can come as soon as one year later, and in most cases the panel's maximum is just under five years. Only in aggravated sexual assault and capital-life cases can a panel reach just under ten — and even there, the length is entirely discretionary. Every review is a new cycle for the family: fresh notice, a new impact statement, reliving the crime again.

2 — WHAT THIS BILL DOES

- **Sets a mandatory floor after the first denial only.** In a covered case, the next review may be set no earlier than 10 years later — a minimum, not a fixed term; a panel may set it later. Later denials return to Board discretion, as today.
- **Covers the most serious cases:** aggravated violent crimes as the current offence — murder, capital murder, aggravated kidnapping, aggravated assault, aggravated robbery, aggravated sexual assault, and the serious injury offences — and repeat violent offenders (two prior violent convictions).
- **Protects supervised release, and changes nothing else.** For finite sentences the floor is 10 years or the remaining sentence minus two years, whichever is sooner — so any release follows a review while about two years remain, under parole conditions including no-contact. Eligibility, sentences, and earned time are untouched: this governs how often a family faces a hearing, never when an inmate first becomes eligible.

3 — HOW IT HELPS VICTIMS

BEFORE	AFTER
A family can be called back as soon as a year after a denial — and again, and again, with no floor to count on.	After the first denial, a guaranteed decade of quiet — no notice, no new statement, no waiting on a decision.

> *"Parole hearings are hard on victims."*
>
> — Lawrence Baitland, father of Cayley Mandadi, murdered October 29, 2017

4 — BALANCE & SAFEGUARDS

Eligibility, sentences, earned time, and the Board's power to deny release are untouched. Medically incapacitated and terminally ill inmates — the medical-release track — are exempt. An inmate may petition to advance the review on changed circumstances or new information, with victim notice and input preserved; there is no Board power to shorten the interval on its own, and no victim-initiated early review. The petition is the single, deliberate door.

5 — HOW HARD WILL THIS BE TO PASS?

●●●●○ **Hard**

The fiscal note is the threat: deferring reviews will be priced, and that number will lead the opposition. The bill also applies to every denial on or after its effective date, including inmates sentenced before it — a deliberate choice that will be challenged in committee. Likely stall point: the fiscal note. Fallback: none narrower is offered — the decade is the bill.

6 — RISKS & MITIGATIONS

RISK / OBJECTION	MITIGATION IN THE BILL OR MESSAGE
"It keeps people in prison longer, at real cost"	Concede it plainly. Cost arises only where a panel would otherwise have granted release at the deferred review; for inmates denied again anyway, it costs nothing. Never claim it pays for itself.
Applying it to inmates already sentenced is retroactive	Spacing changes hearing frequency, not the sentence. California's Supreme Court upheld longer periods for pre-existing inmates in *In re Vicks* (2013), leaning on the petition valve this bill copies. Eligibility is expressly unchanged in the text.

7 — WHO IS LIKELY WITH US — AND AGAINST US

POTENTIAL ALLIES

Texas Crime Victims United — survivor-run; supported the 89th bill lengthening intervals between parole reconsiderations on this same ground. Status: to approach.

Victims' families in covered cases — now cycling through repeat hearings. Ask: testify.

LIKELY OPPONENTS

Criminal-justice reform groups — longer time served; second-chance arguments.

Fiscal conservatives — added inmate-days priced at $86.50 per day in the current cost series.

Defence and civil-liberties voices — retroactivity. *Best counter:* eligibility is untouched — this spaces hearings, it does not bar release.

8 — POTENTIAL AUTHORS FROM BILL SCORING

CANDIDATE	SCORE*	WHY THEY FIT
Sen. Tan Parker — Senate, SD 12	**67.5**	Senate sponsor of HB 2306 in the 89th session.
Rep. Denise Villalobos — House, HD 34	**65**	Authored HB 2306 in the House and carried it to passage.
Sen. Pete Flores — Senate, SD 24	**60.75**	Chaired Senate Criminal Justice in the 89th — the committee gate for a parole bill.

* Score = the advocates' prior bill-scoring rating (89th Legislature backtest). These names were first identified for an earlier, broader design: re-check them against this bill — its closest relative is the 89th session's set-off bill (SB 1506, passed) — in January.

COST

A real fiscal note is expected — grant-rate-dependent, a fraction of what barring parole would cost.

EVIDENCE IT CAN WORK

Texas panels already reach just under 10 years in two categories; the 89th lengthened reconsideration intervals (SB 1506, passed).

NEXT STEP

A 20-minute briefing, then a yes or no on championing. Contact: Lawrence Baitland.