



Abolish Slavery KY

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To the Members of the General Assembly:

As you may be aware, Section 25 of our KY Constitution states that "Slavery and involuntary servitude in this state are prohibited except as punishment for a crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted."

When a judge hands down a sentence, they take details into consideration about the kind of crime that was committed to shape the most fair punishment possible for the one who has been convicted. One problem with the exception clause is that it does not discriminate between a misdemeanor and a felony, violent or non-violent crime, or any other factor. Instead, it applies the same severe measures to everyone regardless of the details of their offense. We can do better than this. We can clarify that a judge's discernment is the final authority.

Efforts were made in 2025 (HB 121 and SB 163) to remove the exception clause from our Constitution. I expect similar legislation to be filed in 2026.

I am interested in learning what are your views are on the matter of indiscriminately applying enslavement and involuntary servitude to every single person who is convicted of any crime. Do you think this is a fair way to practice justice? Would you consider co-sponsoring legislation to remove the exception clause? I would love to know where you stand and what you think.

Please feel free to contact me if you have questions and thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Patricia Gailey, President

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