

May 9, 2019

**Steve Marshall**  
Alabama Attorney General



For media inquiries only, contact:

Mike Lewis (334) 353-2199

Joy Patterson (334) 242-7491

Page 1 of 1

## **Attorney General Steve Marshall Hails Alabama House Passage of Legislation to Reform State's Badly Broken Pardons and Paroles Board**

(MONTGOMERY) — Attorney General Steve Marshall hailed the passage of legislation today by the Alabama House of Representatives to reform the badly broken Alabama Board of Pardons and Paroles. House Bill 380, sponsored by Representative Connie Rowe, R-Jasper, was passed by a vote of 73 to 27.

“For nearly a year, the people have been stunned by news stories of inmates, who were convicted of violent crimes, being released from prison after only serving a fraction of their just punishment behind bars. In one case, Jimmy O’Neal Spencer, a violent offender sentenced to life imprisonment, was released back into the public after the Alabama Board of Pardons and Paroles made the unconscionable decision to grant him parole. Months later, Spencer brutally murdered two women and a seven-year-old boy in their homes. This tragic failure of our justice system should have never happened — and cannot ever be allowed to happen again.

“After Governor Ivey and I asked the Board of Pardons and Paroles to take corrective action, it became clear that needed changes to Board’s procedures could only take place through legislative action. It is telling that the Board has so far not only refused to take full responsibility for its failures, but has stubbornly refused to accept needed structural reforms. The Board has even gone so far as to lobby against legislation to make the Board more accountable to our elected leaders and the public.

“I am pleased today that the Alabama House has heeded the call of thousands of Alabama crime victims in passing House Bill 380 to fix the badly broken Alabama Board of Pardons and Paroles, including giving the Governor authority to appoint a Director of Pardons and Paroles and establish their responsibilities.

“In particular, I want to thank Representative Connie Rowe for her commitment to correcting this extremely important public-safety problem. The legislation has been the subject of vigorous and lengthy debate, and I appreciate Speaker Mac McCutcheon’s dedication to positioning it for final passage. I look forward to similar efforts in the Alabama Senate in the days to come.”

--30--

