

# Time for whole-life sentences to bring justice for murder victims

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A member's bill on whole-life sentences will be brought before MSPs following an exchange at First Minister's Questions today.

Scottish Conservative leader Ruth Davidson highlighted the case of the killer of 15-year-old Paige Doherty, who earlier this month had his sentence reduced by four years on appeal.

She asked Nicola Sturgeon to commit to introducing whole-life sentences, so that judges could ensure killers like John Leatham were locked up for life.

The First Minister stopped short of committing to the move, meaning a member's bill will now be brought forward in an attempt to make whole life sentences possible north of the border.

## **Scottish Conservative leader Ruth Davidson said:**

"The First Minister acknowledged this was a fair issue to raise.

"The question for her SNP government is why it has spent 10 years doing nothing about it.

"It's entirely unacceptable that, less than a year after watching her killer get locked up, Paige Doherty's family should go through the ordeal of seeing him reduce his sentence, on the flawed basis he's not as bad a killer as others.

"Of course it is right to point out we should uphold the independence of the judiciary.

"But it is also the case that the parliament makes law and the Scottish Government sets the framework under which our judges operate.

"That's why there has to be change.

"A system which cuts a child murderer's sentence because he's deemed not as bad as others is rightly seen by most people as a disgrace.

"So if the SNP won't act then we will, by pushing ahead with a member's bill making the case for the introduction of whole-life sentencing in Scotland.

“Whole-life sentences are a tool that judges should have at their disposal. As it stands, in Scotland, they do not.”

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The Scottish Conservatives have repeatedly called for whole-life sentences in Scotland:

<http://www.scottishconservatives.com/2012/01/life-sentences-should-mean-life/>  
<http://www.scottishconservatives.com/2013/05/new-life-sentences-for-police-killers-puts-more-pressure-on-snp-to-toughen-law-in-scotland/>

The killer of Paige Doherty successfully reduced his sentence by four years, arguing he wasn't as bad as other killers:

<https://www.thescottishsun.co.uk/news/628240/paige-doherty-campaign-no-justice-for-paige/>