



Ministry
of Justice

The Right Honourable
David Gauke MP
Lord Chancellor & Secretary of
State for Justice

Bob Neill MP
Chair, Justice Committee
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

8 July 2019

Dear Bob,

HELEN'S LAW

I am writing to let you know that I intend to bring forward legislation, when Parliamentary time allows, to create a Helen's law. I will be announcing this intention at Justice Oral Questions on Tuesday 9 July.

I propose to change the life sentence release test to ensure that, in a case where an offender has been sentenced for murder and the remains of the victim have not been found, the Parole Board must take account of any failure or refusal to disclose the location of those remains when assessing whether such an offender is safe to release.

Whilst the Parole Board already considers such a failure or refusal as part of their risk assessment procedures, our proposal will set this out in statute.

I believe that this is a small but important change to ensure that the circumstances of Helen's Law cases, where, distressingly, the remains of victims cannot be found, are taken full account of in the Parole Board assessment of an offender's risk. I am pleased to say that this proposal has the support of Marie McCourt, Helen's mother and leader of the Helen's Law campaign.

Yours ever,

RT HON DAVID GAUKE MP