

HB853 Maryland Second Look Act

Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee Hearing (Hearing on Tuesday, 3/25 at 1 pm)

Testimony in Support of Second Look Sentencing

**By Terrell Peters
Friday, March 21, 2025**

My name is Terrell Peters, and I am the Campaign and Advocacy Fellow at DC Justice Lab. I am also an ardent advocate, a proud member of the FreeMinds Book Club, Voices for a Second Chance, and a Second Look Project DC client. I stand before you today as living proof of what proper redemption looks like.

We are having this conversation because we now understand how young adolescent minds operate. Science has made it undeniable that the human brain—particularly the prefrontal cortex, responsible for decision-making and impulse control—is not fully developed in young people. If you oppose Second Look amendments, you are either ignoring this science, failing to understand it, or actively choosing to uphold a criminal legal system rooted in racial injustice.

I urge you to consider what it means to navigate life without a fully developed frontal lobe—the very part of the brain responsible for rational decision-making. Adolescents and young adults do not process consequences like fully matured adults, so they are more prone to impulsive actions. However, impulsive mistakes should not define a person for life. Growth is possible. Transformation is real. In DC, there is a 97% success rate for IRAA (Incarceration Reduction Amend Act) returnees. This is a testament to having second looks and second chances.

And to Delegate Mike Griffith—I say to you directly: **we are not monsters**. We are human beings, more than the worst thing we have ever done. We deserve the chance to prove that. A Second Look is not just about mercy—it's about justice.

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