

To the Committee:

I would like to thank you for considering to vote **Yes** for the Second Look Act Bill, HB 0853.

I would like to take this time to introduce you to my daughter's father who is incarcerated at Western Correctional Institution. His name is Benjamin F. Boisseau Jr. He has been incarcerated since the age of 22 that's 33 years and he's been a modeled inmate. While incarcerated he has held many jobs including working in the kitchen, wood shop, tutoring, sanitation, property, building clerk, building representative etc.... He is highly involved in teaching, reading, exhibiting and modeling what his religion and GOD expect him to do on a daily basis. He has been diagnosed with Stage 4 Cancer and he is still working a job and giving leadership advice to the others who are incarcerated. He exhibits the change that qualifies him and many others for the Second Look Act (HB 0853).

As the bill stands right now he would not qualify for HB 0853, because **Lifers Without Parole** has been excluded from the bill. **Felony Murder** is what Benjamin was sentenced under. **He was the co-defendant who didn't intend to harm anyone and couldn't, but received the same amount of time as the perpetrator.** There are a small number of people who fit in the same category as Benjamin. I am praying that reconsideration is given for lifers without parole.

We are asking that you vote **Yes** for HB 0853, so that those that have shown maturity, growth and change can have a second chance. Thank you, Towanda Fenwick

ADDITIONAL:

As your constituent, please support the Maryland Second Look Act.

At every stage in Maryland's legal justice system, we see documented cases of racial profiling by police and racial discrimination in arresting and sentencing. In fact, Maryland is the state that incarcerates the highest percentage of Black people. 71 percent of our prison population are Black people, more than twice the national average and far outranking states like Mississippi and Alabama. We urgently need to remedy this issue, which affects Black families and communities across our state. This legislative session, I am calling on you to pass the Maryland Second Look Act.

The Second Look Act would reduce the existing racial disparities by creating more meaningful avenues for sentence reconsideration for Marylanders who have demonstrated their rehabilitation after serving 20 years of incarceration.

The Second Look Act would not guarantee anyone release, but it would create more fairness and strengthen communities decimated by mass incarceration. Marylanders

who are incarcerated will get the opportunities to express genuine remorse, focus on transforming for the better, support their loved ones, find ways to give back to the community, and not give up on their rehabilitation due to lack of meaningful avenues for release. According to the 2022 National Survey of Victims' Views, victims prefer by 2 to 1 that the criminal legal system focus more on rehabilitating people who commit crimes rather than punishing them. Additionally, the current system encourages excessive litigation over the validity of convictions, which can be deeply harmful to victims. The goal of the Second Look Act is to promote a more restorative approach.

Research shows that young adults are still developing, and recidivism rates decrease among people released from prison in their 40's and beyond. All the available evidence we have in Maryland also supports the fact that people serving extreme sentences are the least likely to re-offend. In the 12 years since the Maryland Supreme Court held that improper jury instructions invalidated the life with parole sentences of 235 people, 96% have remained in the community without incident. These young adults, 90 percent of

whom are Black, spent an average of 40 years behind bars but could have been contributing to our communities decades earlier. In the last two years, the dozens of people to return to the community through parole or the Juvenile Restoration Act have shown similarly compelling success rates.

In the not-so-distant past Black people were excessively sentenced and denied parole based on shameful and now repudiated “super-predator” mythology. Allowing courts to take a second look at the sentence, decades after the crime, is crucial to ensure that excessive sentences due to racism and other biases do not go unchecked.

I feel ashamed that Maryland is known for incarcerating the highest percentage of Black people compared to all other states in our nation. As a constituent in your district, I am calling on you to pass the Maryland Second Look Act to address this problem. Let’s continue to fix racial disparities in Maryland’s carceral system. Vote “**Yes**” on HB 0853 to pass the Second Look Act.

Thank you