

Testimony on HB853  
Maryland Second Look Act  
Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee  
March 21, 2025  
FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS  
Submitted by Craig Muhammad

I, Craig Muhammad, am testifying in support of HB853, the Maryland Second Look Act. I am submitting this testimony as a previously incarcerated person, as Director of Project Emancipation Now (PEN) and as a member of the Second Look Coalition.

Passage of the Maryland Second Look Act would create a meaningful opportunity for sentence modification for incarcerated people after having served 20 years of their sentence. I firmly believe that those individuals who are able to demonstrate their growth and rehabilitation, such that they are no longer a threat to public safety, should have the opportunity for modification of sentence.

On September 24, 2024, I was released from incarceration after serving 41 years and 32 days. During my incarceration I took advantage of every opportunity to become the best version of myself and to be equipped to make amends for the acts I committed in ignorance. I earned a B.S. degree in Psychology, became a special and GED tutor in correctional education, became a writing tutor with the University of Baltimore Second Chance College Program, received certification as a Peer Recovery Specialist and became co-founder of Project Emancipation Now. I am also a three-time published author. PEN is a gang emancipation, violence interruption, mentoring and victim-community impact services organization. PEN has emancipated more people from gangs than any other entity in Maryland. During my incarceration, I have mentored hundreds of young men. After my release, I brought my skill set to the community where I have provided peer support services to hundreds of men and women in the six months since my release. And I am in the process of bringing PEN to the community. The things I have detailed here are only a fraction of the things I have accomplished. Nevertheless, as impressive as my accomplishments may seem, I represent only a fraction of the men and women who turned their lives around during incarceration. Like me, those men and women deserve a second chance too.

Please support the Second Look in a form that will give everyone the opportunity for a second chance. Thank you for your community service and may God bless you.