

**TESTIMONY ON HB 853  
MARYLAND SECOND LOOK ACT**

**Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee  
March 25, 2025**

**FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS**

Submitted by: **Derek Borowsky**

Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher and members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee:

**I, Derek Borowsky, am testifying in support of HB 853, the Maryland Second Look Act. I am submitting this testimony as a community member in District 2.**

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 after having served decades of incarceration, all individuals should have the ability to demonstrate their growth and rehabilitation.

I am grateful for the opportunity this bill creates for those who would be eligible for a second look under this bill. However to affect real change, more is needed, as Maryland leads the nation in sentencing young Black men to the longest prison terms, which includes Life Without Parole Sentences, at a rate 25% higher than the next nearest state, Mississippi<sup>1</sup>.

I urge you to vote **favorable with amendments**. As the current bill language stands, it excludes **individuals serving life without parole and individuals over 24 at the time of the offense, which is antithetical to the principle of the Act: that 20 years provides the opportunity for significant growth.**

The Juvenile Restoration Act, which HB 853 builds upon, banned Life Without Parole (LWOP) for minors sentenced as adults and gave individuals convicted as adults for crimes committed under 18 the chance to request a sentence reduction after serving 20 years, including those originally sentenced to LWOP as minors. Excluding LWOP from the Second Look process while allowing it under the JRA just doesn't make sense. Research consistently shows that brain development continues into the mid-to-late 20s, with the prefrontal cortex, the part responsible for decision-making, among the last to fully mature. Emerging adults still share many of the same risk factors as youth, such as increased impulsivity, greater risk-taking, poor decision-making, and difficulty with long-term thinking<sup>2</sup>.

Women and criminalized survivors are much more likely to be older when they commit an offense. Limiting the age for second look will disproportionately exclude criminalized survivors.

For these reasons, I encourage you to vote **favorably with amendments** on the **Maryland Second Look Act HB853**.

Thank you.

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<sup>1</sup> Justice Policy Institute [Rethinking Approaches to Over Incarceration of Black Young Adults in Maryland](#) (2019).

<sup>2</sup> Martha Lally & Suzanne Valentine-French [Lifespan Development: A Psychological Perspective](#) (2025)