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Judicial Proceedings Committee



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THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

January 27, 2026

The Maryland State Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
The Honorable William C. Smith, Jr.
2 East Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: Senate Bill 162 – Motion to Reduce Duration of Sentence – Repeal of Sentencing Date Limitation

Chair Smith, Vice-Chair Waldstreicher, and Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee,

I am here to introduce Senate Bill 162. This legislation would fix an anomaly in the Juvenile Restoration Act.

In 2021, the General Assembly passed the Juvenile Restoration Act. That Act allows people who have been incarcerated for at least 20 years for a crime that they committed when they were under 18 years of age to file a motion with the court that sentenced them for reduction of sentence. The States Attorney may appear at the hearing and introduce evidence and argue against the sentence reduction. After the hearing, the law permits the court to reduce the sentence only if it determines “that the individual is not a danger to the public and the interests of justice will be better served by a reduced sentence.”

Last year, the Second Look Act extended the group of convicted persons able to go back to court after 20 years in jail to include people who committed their crimes up until they were 25 years old. So, at this point, anyone who committed a serious crime up until they were 25 years old and who has served 20 years of incarceration may go back to the court that sentenced them and ask the court to consider reducing the remaining term of their confinement.

But now here’s the anomaly. When the Juvenile Restoration Act went over to the House, language crept into the bill excluding a small subset of juveniles from the Act’s coverage. I am given to understand that the reason for the exclusion was that the House Judiciary Committee intended to introduce separate legislation dealing with parole reform that would have affected the excluded group. But that never happened, and the exclusionary language has remained in the Act ever since.

So as a result of the exclusionary language, juveniles who committed crimes and were sentenced prior to October 1, 2021 are not able to take advantage of the Juvenile Restoration Act, but all

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other Maryland citizens who committed a crime under the age of 25 are able to petition for a reduction of their sentences after they have been in prison for 20 years. No one has been able to provide a logical reason why the exclusion exists, and I believe that there is in fact NO logical rationale for the exclusion.

It defies common sense for some youthful offenders to be able to proceed under the Juvenile Restoration Act while others do not have that course available to them, simply because of the inclusion of the arbitrary October 1, 2021 date in the current law. We need to eliminate this anomaly from the law.

I appreciate the Committee's consideration of Senate Bill 162 and will be happy to answer any questions.