MCVRC
Maryland Crime Victims' Resource Center, Inc.

Continuing the Missions of the Stephanie Roper Committee and Foundation, Inc.

877-VICTIM-1 (877-842-8461) mail@mdcrimevictims.org mdcrimevictims.org

1001 Prince George's Blvd, Suite 750
Upper Marlboro, MD 20774
301-952-0063 (Phone)
301-952-2319 (fax)

1 North Charles Street, Suite 700
Baltimore, MD 21201
410-234-9885 (phone)

January 23, 2026

Re: Unfavorable to SB 162

Dear Chair Smith and Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee,

On behalf of the Maryland Crime Victims' Resource Center, Inc. (MCVRC), I respectfully request an unfavorable report on Senate Bill 162. MCVRC provides legal services to crime victims throughout Maryland and is among the largest nonprofit organizations of its kind in the nation. In the past year alone, we assisted more than 1,300 new victims and surviving family members. We write on behalf of our clients—families who did not choose violence, but who live every day with the permanent consequences of murders committed by juvenile offenders.

SB 162 would repeal the October 1, 2021 sentencing date limitation contained in the Juvenile Restoration Act (SB 494), substantially expanding eligibility for sentence modification for individuals convicted as adults of offenses committed when they were minors. When SB 494 was enacted and took effect in October 2021, the General Assembly made a deliberate and carefully balanced policy choice. The Act applied only to individuals sentenced **before** that date, allowing up to three sentence modification hearings **after 20 years of incarceration**, while reforming juvenile sentencing practices prospectively.

Importantly, the Juvenile Restoration Act was not limited to post-conviction relief. It also:

- Prohibited the imposition of life without the possibility of parole for individuals under the age of 18 at the time of the offense; and
- Authorized courts to depart downward from mandatory minimum sentences when sentencing minors charged as adults.

These reforms already account for the reality that **sentences imposed today are significantly less severe than those imposed twenty or more years ago**. Individuals sentenced after October 1, 2021 benefit from these changes at the front end, at the time of sentencing.

It is also critical to recognize that individuals convicted of serious crimes already have **multiple avenues through which their sentences may be reviewed or reduced**, including parole consideration, executive clemency, and other existing post-conviction mechanisms. The existence of these opportunities does not justify continually adding new layers of review that require victims and surviving family members to repeatedly relive their trauma. At some point, repeated reconsideration becomes less about justice and more about imposing ongoing emotional harm.

Victims did not choose what happened to them. They did not choose the violence inflicted upon their loved ones or themselves. In contrast, in the most serious violent offenses—including murder—defendants made deliberate choices: choices about whether to act violently, the means used, the victim targeted, the location of the crime, and the timing. Often, these choices were made with the intent to avoid detection or silence witnesses. These are not impulsive or abstract harms; they are intentional acts that forever alter—and often end—human lives.

For victims, sentencing represents a moment of accountability and stability. Repeated resentencing proceedings—often decades later and frequently with limited notice—force victims to continually reengage with the person who caused irreparable harm and with the circumstances of the crime itself. SB 162 would expand this retraumatization, particularly in cases involving the most violent offenses, without sufficient regard for the cumulative and lasting impact on victims.

MCVRC supports thoughtful criminal justice reform and acknowledges the importance of rehabilitation. However, we do not believe that continually expanding retroactive resentencing opportunities serves the interests of justice, public safety, or victims' rights. The current statutory framework already reflects significant reform while preserving essential finality and dignity for victims.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge the Committee to issue an **unfavorable report on SB 162**. Thank you for your time, consideration, and continued commitment to Maryland's crime victims.

Respectfully,

Joanna D. Mupanduki

Joanna D. Mupanduki, Esq.
Deputy Director
Maryland Crime Victims Resource Center, Inc.