



TESTIMONY - FAVORABLE

SB162 Criminal Procedure – Motion to Reduce Duration of Sentence – Repeal of 3 Sentencing Date Limitation

To: The Honorable Senator William C. Smith, Chair, Senator Jeff Waldstreicher, Vice Chair, and Members of the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

FROM: The Rev. Linda K. Boyd, Maryland Episcopal Public Policy Network (MEPPN)

DATE: January 27, 2026

The Maryland Episcopal Public Policy Network (MEPPN) submits this testimony in support of SB 162. This is a simple bill that ensures fundamental fairness and compliance with the U.S. Constitution in sentencing review.

Last session, the Maryland Second Look Act expanded the judicial review mechanism to include certain individuals who were ages 18 to 24 at the time of their offense. This has created an unconstitutional inconsistency, where individuals aged 18 to 24 receive an opportunity for review while individuals under 18 do not. For example, if a 15-year-old child and 24-year-old individual were arrested today as co-defendants, the 24-year-old would receive sentence review after 20 years while the 15-year-old youth would not. After a decade and a half of U.S. Supreme Court jurisprudence emphasizing how children are different than adults for the purposes of criminal sentencing, it is contrary to Constitutional protections that individuals 18 and over receive sentencing review while children under 18 do not.

SB 162 is a common-sense, straightforward technical fix to ensure these disparities do not exist. A meaningful opportunity for review should be available to all children under 18, regardless of when they were sentenced.

For these reasons, the Maryland Episcopal Public Policy Network urges the House Judiciary Committee to issue a favorable report on SB 162.

The Maryland Episcopal Public Policy Network (MEPPN) is a ministry of The Episcopal Diocese of Maryland, The Episcopal Diocese of Washington, and The Delaware-Maryland Synod ELCA