

# Written Testimony in Support of SB162 – Juvenile Restoration Act (Technical Fix Bill)

Before the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

Hearing Date: January 27

Position: Favorable

My name is Carl Stanton, Jr., and I am submitting this testimony in strong support of Senate Bill 162, the Juvenile Restoration Act – Technical Fix Bill.

I write today not as a lawyer or policymaker, but as a brother.

My brother, Diontre Stanton, has been incarcerated since September 4, 1999. He was only sixteen years old at the time. He entered the system as a child—still developing, still learning, still capable of growth and transformation. Today, more than two decades later, he is a grown man who has spent the majority of his life behind bars.

SB162 matters deeply to families like mine.

This legislation does not guarantee release. It does not erase accountability. What it does is provide something essential to justice: a meaningful opportunity for review—a chance for courts to consider who a person has become after decades of incarceration for conduct committed as a juvenile.

Science, common sense, and lived experience all tell us that teenagers are different from adults. Adolescents lack maturity, are more susceptible to peer pressure, and are still forming judgment and impulse control. That is why the United States Supreme Court has repeatedly recognized that youth matters in sentencing.

SB162 reflects that same principle.

Over the years, my brother has matured, reflected deeply on his actions, and worked to better himself while incarcerated. Like many people sentenced as juveniles, he has grown into someone very different from the teenager he once was. Yet under outdated legal structures, individuals like him can be denied even the opportunity to demonstrate that change.

This bill restores balance.

It ensures that the Juvenile Restoration Act functions as intended—allowing courts to evaluate rehabilitation, disciplinary records, educational achievements, remorse, personal growth, and readiness to reenter society. It gives judges the ability to make informed, individualized decisions rather than leaving people permanently defined by the worst moment of their childhood.

For families, SB162 is about hope.

Hope that redemption is possible.

Hope that our loved ones are not frozen in time as teenagers forever.

Hope that Maryland continues to lead with fairness, humanity, and evidence-based justice.

Our family has carried the weight of my brother's absence for more than twenty-five years. Parents age. Siblings grow up. Children are born who never meet their uncle outside of prison walls. SB162 gives families like ours something we have waited decades for—a chance to be heard and a chance for the courts to reassess whether continued incarceration still serves justice.

I respectfully urge the members of the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee to issue a favorable report on SB162.

Maryland has taken important steps toward recognizing the difference between youth and adulthood. This technical fix is necessary to ensure that those reforms work as intended.

Thank you for your time, your service, and your consideration of this deeply important legislation.

Respectfully submitted,

Carl Stanton Jr

Brother of Diontre Stanton

Washington, DC