

January 23, 2026

The Honorable William C. Smith, Jr.

Chair, Judicial Proceedings Committee

2 East Miller Senate Office Building

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Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: Support for SB 162, Criminal Procedure, Motion to Reduce Duration of Sentence, Repeal of Sentencing Date Limitation

Dear Chair Smith,

Maryland Latinos Unidos (MLU) is honored to express our strong support for Senate Bill 162, Criminal Procedure, Motion to Reduce Duration of Sentence, Repeal of Sentencing Date Limitation. SB 162 repeals the October 1, 2021 sentencing date limitation for individuals convicted as adults of offenses committed when they were minors to file motions to reduce sentence duration. SB 162 is scheduled for a hearing in the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee on January 27, 2026 at 1:00 p.m., and the bill's effective date is October 1, 2026.

This bill supports fairness and rehabilitation by ensuring that individuals who were children at the time of the offense can access a meaningful opportunity for review based on maturity, growth, and changed circumstances. Modern justice policy increasingly recognizes that adolescence is a distinct developmental period, and that people have significant capacity for change as they age into adulthood.

Latino youth can be disproportionately impacted by system barriers including limited access to high quality defense resources, language access needs in the family, and exposure to community level inequities. Allowing review pathways that recognize youth status at the time of the offense is consistent with public safety because it focuses resources on individualized assessment and reintegration readiness.

MLU will support SB 162's promise by collaborating with community partners focused on reentry, supporting family stabilization and navigation, and elevating culturally responsive resources that help returning residents succeed.

MLU urges the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee to issue a favorable report on SB 162, advancing proportionality, second chances, and community stability.

Sincerely,

Carlos Orbe, Jr.

Communications and Public Affairs Specialist

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