



**Senate Bill 162**  
**Criminal Procedure – Motion to Reduce Duration of Sentence – Repeal of**  
**Sentencing Date Limitation**  
**January 23, 2026**  
**Position: Favorable**

The Choice Program at UMBC is in support of *SB162: Criminal Procedure – Motion to Reduce Duration of Sentence – Repeal of Sentencing Date Limitation*. It is an important measure to ensure fairness and constitutional compliance.

As a mentoring program, we have served more than 27,000 Maryland young people and emerging adults who are systems-involved. Presently, Choice works with young people (ages 10-24) and their families in Baltimore City as well as Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Harford, Howard, Prince George’s, and Montgomery Counties. Choice serves as an alternative to the school-to-prison pipeline. Our primary goal is to reduce the number of Black and Latine young people who are ensnared in the youth and criminal legal system.

Our model is intentionally designed to dismantle racist structures and instead employs strengths-based approaches grounded in positive youth development. We hold high expectations for young people and parents alongside high levels of support. Through nearly four decades of work, we have seen that with the proper resources and opportunities, young people are capable of meaningful growth and change. Our youth consistently remind us that they should not be defined by their worst mistake. These principles are essential to addressing racial inequities at the individual level and within the broader system.

SB 162 is a simple but critical bill that advances fundamental fairness in sentencing review and brings Maryland in compliance with the U.S. Constitution. This is especially important given the findings of the Maryland Equitable Justice Collaborative who recommended the Second Look Act as one means to mitigate the racial inequities endemic in our criminal legal system. (*MEJC Breaking the 71%: A Path Toward Racial Equity in the Criminal Legal System, 2025*).

Maryland's incarceration system has long imposed its harshest consequences on Black young people and emerging adults. Black Marylanders are dramatically overrepresented among those serving long sentences, including sentences imposed during adolescence. As a result, any inconsistency or exclusion in sentencing review laws does not fall evenly across the population; it disproportionately harms Black people and reinforces racial disparities that our state has pledged to dismantle.

Last session, the Maryland Second Look Act expanded judicial sentence review to include certain individuals who were ages 18 to 24 at the time of their offense. While this expansion was an important first step, it created a stark and unconstitutional inconsistency: individuals ages 18 to 24 are now eligible for sentence review, while individuals who were under 18 at the time of their offense are excluded. This disparity is particularly troubling given that Black and Latine young people are more likely to be prosecuted harshly and sentenced to lengthy terms.

SB 162 is a reasonable, straightforward fix that closes this gap. It ensures that all individuals who were under 18 at the time of sentencing—regardless of when they were sentenced—have a meaningful opportunity for judicial review. By passing SB 162, Maryland can take a necessary step toward reducing racial disparities in incarceration, honoring constitutional principles, and affirming that children deserve the opportunity for growth, accountability, and redemption.

For more information contact:  
Kelly Quinn, Ph.D., Managing Director  
[kquinn@umbc.edu](mailto:kquinn@umbc.edu)