

**Testimony of Roberta Roper in Opposition to Senate Bill 162 - Criminal  
Procedure -Motion to Reduce Duration of Sentence – Repeal of Sentencing  
Date Limitations  
February 27, 2026**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman and members of the Senate Judicial Proceeding Committee, for the opportunity to testify in opposition to SB 162. I am compelled to speak not only about my family's personal experience, but on behalf of the many survivors served by the Maryland Crime Victims' Resource Center, Inc. (MCVRC) for the past forty-three years. Some of you may know that MCVRC was originally founded by my husband and me as the Stephanie Roper Committee and Foundation, Inc. in tribute to the daughter who was brutally taken from us in 1982. Stephanie was kidnapped, tortured, raped, brutally murdered by two men who then began dismembering her body and setting it on fire. We, her family were shut out of the trial and silenced at sentencing. Those experiences nearly destroyed our family, challenging everything we valued, confidence in government, trust in people, faith in God. It shattered our community and left enduring wounds. Gratefully, we have worked very hard to change the criminal justice system's treatment of crime victims. MCVRC has successfully advocated for the passage of more than 100 laws to provide victims with rights and services. Today, MCVRC is recognized as one of our nation's most distinguished and successful non-profits who support, advocate and represent the legal interest of crime victims and survivors.

I have spent the last four decades of my life advocating for victims' rights and services and being the voice for those who have been forever silenced. By expanding an inmate's right to reduce the duration of a sentence, government re-victimizes survivors and threaten public safety. It is not only devastating to scores of victims and survivors but destroys public trust and confidence in the criminal justice system. SB 162 authorizes any individual who was a minor and has served twenty years to petition a court for repeal of the sentencing date limitation and seek release and then allowing that petition to be repeated every three years. Both victims and citizens can correctly question where is the truth in sentencing? Some crimes are so horrific in their nature that they deserve an appropriate punishment. Victims and survivors, no less than their rapists and killers, deserve compassion and some sense of finality. And who is best equipped to determine an inmate's readiness for release? It is certainly *not* a court. We believe that parole commissioners are the appropriate body to make release decisions.

This legislative action undermines the Parole Board's authority. Let us preserve Maryland's Parole Commission and allow them to determine appropriate release of an inmate with full facts and individualized attention.

I respectfully ask you to restore confidence in our criminal justice system and not approve SB 162. The criminal system belongs to all of us. We must ensure that it serves all of us.