

# **SB 162 - Written Testimony.pdf**

Uploaded by: Anthony Wazir Muhammad

Position: FAV

**TO:**

Senator William C. Smith, Jr., Chair

Senator Jeff Waldstreicher, Vice Chair

Members of the *Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee*:

**FROM:**

Anthony Wazir Muhammad

Maryland Parole Partnership / ACLU of Maryland

[amuhammad@aclu-md.org](mailto:amuhammad@aclu-md.org)

**RE: SENATE BILL 162**

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

POSITION: **SUPPORT**

January 23, 2026

Greetings,

I respectfully submit this written testimony for the official record to express my **SUPPORT** for *Senate Bill 162*.

I am a returning citizen. At the age of 15, I was arrested for two homicide charges in the City of Baltimore. I was ultimately convicted and sentenced to life plus a consecutive 20-years in prison.

The judge who sentenced me *mistakenly* believed that I was unredeemable, unreformable, and that the actions I committed were unreconcilable. Despite having no prior adult conviction, the judge said it was a shame that someone so young could go so far wrong at such an early age in life. She stated that I had “*little prospect of ever being able to come out and function,*” and that I showed very “*little hope of rehabilitation.*” The judge was unconvinced that “*job training, education, and such would make [me] a safe citizen,*” and in her most condemning remarks stated her belief that if I was ever given the opportunity to commit the crimes again “*it would happen.*”

Thankfully, the judge who sentenced me was all wrong about me. Egregious as my crimes were, they were not the result of “*permanent incorrigibility,*” “*irreparable corruption,*” or “*exhibit such irretrievable depravity that rehabilitation is impossible,*” as articulated in several cases by the U.S. Supreme Court.

Today, I respectfully submit to this committee that not only am I redeemed, reformed, and rehabilitated, but reconciled with the family of my victims who have granted me their forgiveness after successfully completing victim/offender mediation.

I served a total of 29-YEARS, 7-MONTHS, & 29-DAYS before I was released under the Maryland Juvenile Restoration Act on September 20, 2022. There are no words adequate enough to express the depths of my remorse for the crimes I committed. I made a horrible decision! It was the worst decision I ever made in my life; a painful decision that I deeply regret – daily!

I will ALWAYS accept responsibility for my actions and continue to express my sincere and deep remorse. Additionally, as famous civil rights attorney, author of the book *Just Mercy*, and founder of the *Equal Justice Initiative*, Brian Stevenson, once said: ***“Each of us is more than the worst thing we have ever done.”***

I am very pleased to inform this committee that I am one of many JRA releases who have successfully reintegrated back into society, who collectively share a less than 4% recidivism rate. Since the day of my release, I continue to vigorously work 3-jobs: the *Maryland Parole Partnership* at the *ACLU of Maryland*; I am a Community Engagement Specialist with *We Our Us*, where I use my lived experience as a credible messenger doing community violence intervention; and I am a Youth Mentor with *Baltimore Brothers, Inc.*, helping other youth not make the same bad decisions I made.

SB 162 is a simple bill that ensures fundamental fairness. It is a common-sense, straightforward technical fix to ensure disparities doesn't exist, and a meaningful opportunity for a sentence review hearing (not a guarantee of release) is available to all children who commit crimes in Maryland when they are under the age 18 - regardless of when they are sentenced for the crime.

For these reasons, I urge a favorable report on Senate Bill 162. Thank you for your time and consideration of this legislation.

**OPD written testimony in support of SB 162.pdf**

Uploaded by: Brian Saccenti

Position: FAV



**NATASHA DARTIGUE**  
PUBLIC DEFENDER

**KEITH LOTRIDGE**  
DEPUTY PUBLIC DEFENDER

**ELIZABETH HILLIARD**  
DIRECTOR OF GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

## POSITION ON PROPOSED LEGISLATION

**BILL: Senate Bill 162 – Criminal Procedure – Motion to Reduce Duration of Sentence  
– Repeal of Sentencing Date Limitation**

**FROM: Maryland Office of the Public Defender**

**POSITION: Favorable**

**DATE: January 23, 2026**

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The Maryland Office of the Public Defender respectfully requests that the Committee issue a favorable report on Senate Bill 162.

Senate Bill 162 is a technical fix to an inconsistency in Criminal Procedure Article § 8-110. That section authorizes individuals who have been imprisoned for at least 20 years for a crime that occurred when they were under 25 years of age to file a motion for reduction of sentence.

At present, the statute allows individuals who were at least 18 but not yet 25 years old at the time of the crime to file a motion regardless of when they were sentenced, but allows individuals who were under 18 years old at the time of the crime to file a motion *only if they were sentenced before October 1, 2021*. Senate Bill 162 eliminates this inconsistency by removing the language requiring that minors must have been sentenced before October 1, 2021, to be eligible to file a motion.

This sentencing-date restriction indefensibly and perversely treats people who were minors at the time of the crime *worse* than people who were young adults. It incentivizes people who were young adults when the crime occurred to rehabilitate themselves by giving them hope that a judge will one day take those efforts into account and reduce their sentences, but it provides no such incentive – and no such hope – to people who are sentenced today for crimes that occurred when they were under the age of 18. Senate Bill 162 merely eliminates this inconsistency and gives minors convicted as adults the same positive incentives and hope as the statute presently gives eligible young adults.

**For these reasons, the Maryland Office of the Public Defender urges this Committee to issue a favorable report on Senate Bill 162.**

**Submitted by: Maryland Office of the Public Defender, Government Relations Division**

**Authored by: Brian Saccenti & Lila Meadows**  
**Decarceration Initiative**  
**Maryland Office of the Public Defender**  
**brian.saccenti@maryland.gov**  
**lila.meadows@maryland.gov**

# **SBA Diontre.pdf**

Uploaded by: Carl Stanton Jr

Position: FAV

# 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

# **SB 162, Criminal Procedure, Motion to Reduce Durat**

Uploaded by: Carlos Orbe, Jr.

Position: FAV

January 23, 2026

The Honorable William C. Smith, Jr.

Chair, Judicial Proceedings Committee

2 East Miller Senate Office Building

2 East Miller Senate Office Building

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

Maryland Latinos Unidos

[corbejr@mdlatinosunidos.org](mailto:corbejr@mdlatinosunidos.org)

# **2026 Testimony on SB 162 FAV Cichowski.pdf**

Uploaded by: Carol Cichowski

Position: FAV

**Senate Bill 162**  
**Criminal Procedure – Motion to Reduce Duration of Sentence –**  
**Repeal of Sentencing Date Limitation**  
**Judicial Proceedings Committee – January 27, 2026**  
**FAVORABLE**

**Thank you for this opportunity to submit written testimony in support of Senate Bill 162.** I am a long-time resident of Montgomery County. I previously served as a citizen member of the Montgomery County Commission on Juvenile Justice.

**SB 162 would eliminate language in the Juvenile Restoration Act (JRA) that currently restricts eligibility for possible resentencing to individuals who were sentenced as children before October 1, 2021.** Unless this language is eliminated, individuals sentenced as children on or after October 1, 2021, would be treated less favorably than individuals sentenced at ages 18 to 24, who are now eligible for reconsideration under legislative changes that were in the 2025 session. **It makes no sense to leave behind individuals who were sentenced as children when it is still the case that the opportunities provided under the JRA for judicial review serve the public’s interest in supporting the rehabilitation of juveniles, addressing mass incarceration, and fostering safe and healthy communities.**

Research on brain development tells us that teenagers have brains that are not fully developed. As a result, they are less capable of controlling their emotions and more impulsive in stressful situations. They lack maturity and the ability to weigh the consequences of their actions. **The Supreme Court has long recognized that these differences in brain development between children and adults make children less culpable.** It was this evidence on brain science that Maryland lawmakers found persuasive when they enacted the JRA.

**It is also clear that judges can be trusted to make good judgments about the readiness of individuals who have spent at least 20 years behind the prison walls to return to their communities and lead productive lives.** Since the enactment of the JRA, judges have recognized the enormous capacity of young people to change after 20 years of incarceration but have not treated the JRA as a get-out-of-jail-free card. The JRA has proved to be good law.

**I believe in giving individuals second chances because the social, human, moral, and economic costs of keeping people behind bars longer than needed to achieve the goals of incarceration are enormous.** If given a second chance, individuals who caused harm to others during their adolescence can become caring family members, good neighbors, and productive members of the community. We all benefit when people who have been incarcerated are successfully reintegrated into the community.

**For these reasons, I urge a Favorable report on SB 162. This bill makes a commonsense change and is good public policy.**

Carol Cichowski  
Bethesda, Maryland



# **SEIU Local 500 - Testimony in Support of SB 162 20**

Uploaded by: Christopher Cano

Position: FAV



Testimony - SB 162, Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Criminal Procedure –  
Motion to Reduce Duration of Sentence – Repeal of Sentencing Date Limitation  
Favorable

Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

January 27, 2026

Christopher C. Cano, MPA

Director of Political & Legislative Affairs on Behalf of SEIU Local 500

Honorable Chairman Smith & Members of the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee:

SEIU Local Local 500 represents thousands of public service workers across Maryland, including workers who serve communities most impacted by the criminal legal system. Our members believe deeply in accountability, rehabilitation, and a justice system that recognizes human growth and transformation over time.

Senate Bill 162 is a narrowly tailored and thoughtful reform. It does not guarantee release, nor does it weaken public safety protections. Instead, it restores judicial discretion by allowing courts to consider sentence reduction motions based on an individual's demonstrated rehabilitation, maturity, and conduct after decades of incarceration. Importantly, SB 162 ensures that these decisions are made transparently, through a court hearing, with full notice to victims and an opportunity for victim impact statements.

Decades of research and lived experience show that people who commit offenses as minors are fundamentally different from adults in terms of brain development, impulse control, and capacity for change. By removing the arbitrary sentencing date cutoff, SB 162 aligns Maryland law with these well-established principles and with evolving standards of fairness and proportionality in sentencing.

From a workforce and community perspective, continuing to incarcerate individuals who no longer pose a threat and who have demonstrated rehabilitation carries significant human and fiscal costs. Allowing courts to review these cases promotes smarter use of

public resources while reinforcing the values of redemption and second chances that strengthen families and communities.

SEIU Local 500 strongly supports SB 162 and urges the Committee to issue a favorable report. This bill reflects Maryland's commitment to justice that is both firm and fair, and to a system that recognizes accountability alongside the possibility of growth and change.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Christopher C. Cano, MPA  
Director of Political & Legislative Affairs  
SEIU Local 500

# **SB162.pdf**

Uploaded by: Christopher West

Position: FAV

CHRIS WEST  
Legislative District 42  
Baltimore and Carroll Counties

Judicial Proceedings Committee



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THE SENATE OF MARYLAND  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

January 27, 2026

The Maryland State Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee  
The Honorable William C. Smith, Jr.  
2 East Miller Senate Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

**RE: Senate Bill 162 – Motion to Reduce Duration of Sentence – Repeal of Sentencing Date Limitation**

Chair Smith, Vice-Chair Waldstreicher, and Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee,

I am here to introduce Senate Bill 162. This legislation would fix an anomaly in the Juvenile Restoration Act.

In 2021, the General Assembly passed the Juvenile Restoration Act. That Act allows people who have been incarcerated for at least 20 years for a crime that they committed when they were under 18 years of age to file a motion with the court that sentenced them for reduction of sentence. The States Attorney may appear at the hearing and introduce evidence and argue against the sentence reduction. After the hearing, the law permits the court to reduce the sentence only if it determines “that the individual is not a danger to the public and the interests of justice will be better served by a reduced sentence.”

Last year, the Second Look Act extended the group of convicted persons able to go back to court after 20 years in jail to include people who committed their crimes up until they were 25 years old. So, at this point, anyone who committed a serious crime up until they were 25 years old and who has served 20 years of incarceration may go back to the court that sentenced them and ask the court to consider reducing the remaining term of their confinement.

But now here’s the anomaly. When the Juvenile Restoration Act went over to the House, language crept into the bill excluding a small subset of juveniles from the Act’s coverage. I am given to understand that the reason for the exclusion was that the House Judiciary Committee intended to introduce separate legislation dealing with parole reform that would have affected the excluded group. But that never happened, and the exclusionary language has remained in the Act ever since.

So as a result of the exclusionary language, juveniles who committed crimes and were sentenced prior to October 1, 2021 are not able to take advantage of the Juvenile Restoration Act, but all

**CHRIS WEST**  
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—  
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**THE SENATE OF MARYLAND**  
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other Maryland citizens who committed a crime under the age of 25 are able to petition for a reduction of their sentences after they have been in prison for 20 years. No one has been able to provide a logical reason why the exclusion exists, and I believe that there is in fact NO logical rationale for the exclusion.

It defies common sense for some youthful offenders to be able to proceed under the Juvenile Restoration Act while others do not have that course available to them, simply because of the inclusion of the arbitrary October 1, 2021 date in the current law. We need to eliminate this anomaly from the law.

I appreciate the Committee's consideration of Senate Bill 162 and will be happy to answer any questions.

**Crystal Carpenter Testimony SB 162 (1).pdf**

Uploaded by: Crystal Carpenter

Position: FAV



The **CAMPAIGN** for the  
**FAIR SENTENCING**  
of **YOUTH**

Bill: Senate Bill 162  
Title: Criminal Procedure – Motion to Reduce Duration of Sentence – Repeal of Sentencing Date Limitation  
Date: January 23, 2026  
Position: SUPPORT  
Committee: Judicial Proceedings Committee  
CONTACT: Crystal Carpenter, Campaign for the Fair Sentencing of Youth

Chair Smith, Vice-Chair Waldstreicher, and members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee:

My name is Crystal Carpenter. I serve as Chief Operating Officer (COO) of the Campaign for the Fair Sentencing of Youth (CFSY) and have the honor of leading its **National Family Network** (NFN). I respectfully submit this testimony in **support** of Senate Bill 162. I thank Senator West for introducing this legislation and appreciate the General Assembly’s continued commitment to fair and constitutional youth sentencing.

The CFSY is a national coalition working to end extreme youth sentencing and advance age-appropriate, constitutional approaches to accountability, healing, and public safety.

The NFN is a collective of family members and loved ones impacted by youth violence. This includes individuals who have lost loved ones to youth violence, as well as families of people serving lengthy adult sentences for acts committed as children. The Network promotes healing and restorative practices and works to end extreme sentences for youth, including life without the possibility of parole.

CFSY proudly supported the 2021 passage of the Juvenile Restoration Act, which created a meaningful opportunity for sentence review after 20 years for individuals who were under 18 at the time of their offense. However, the current sentencing date limitation leaves some children unfairly excluded from that opportunity.

SB 162 is a common-sense, straightforward technical fix that removes this arbitrary restriction and ensures that all children under 18—regardless of when they were sentenced—have access to

the same opportunity for review. This change promotes fairness, aligns with constitutional principles recognizing that children are different from adults for sentencing purposes, and reduces unnecessary legal risk for the state.

Most importantly, SB 162 restores hope—hope for families waiting for their loved ones to be seen as more than their worst mistake, and hope for young people inside who are working every day to grow and change. That hope should not depend on an arbitrary date in the statute.

For these reasons, I urge the Committee to issue a favorable report on SB 162. Thank you for your consideration.

Crystal Carpenter  
Chief Operating Officer  
Campaign for the Fair Sentencing of Youth

# **Earl Young Testimony SB 162.pdf**

Uploaded by: Earl Young

Position: FAV

## **Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 162**

**Earl Young**

**January 23, 2026**

**Judicial Proceedings Committee**

Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in strong support of Senate Bill 162. I am a Maryland resident and a returning citizen who served nearly 35 years in the Maryland prison system before Governor Larry Hogan commuted my life sentence to 49 years. Because of the diminution credits I earned, I returned home in 2019, prior to the passage of the Juvenile Restoration Act.

I entered prison in 1984 at the age of 17. At that time, I still had hope—hope that if I worked hard, stayed out of trouble, and focused on rehabilitation, I could one day return home through parole after serving 15 years. That hope was severely damaged in 1995 when Governor Parris Glendening implemented the “life means life” policy. Overnight, it became clear that no matter how much good I did, it would not matter.

Despite that reality, I continued to do good. I earned my GED, pursued college courses, and maintained trusted and preferred work assignments. Many others were not able to continue in the same way. When hope is removed, people give up. They lose motivation, purpose, and a reason to live. Hopelessness creates instability within prisons, requiring higher security and making institutions more dangerous for everyone—incarcerated people and staff alike.

Since returning home, I have continued the same type of service I committed to while incarcerated. I mentor youth in Baltimore City schools and now serve as a supervisor, hiring and overseeing individuals who mentor young people. I work with the Mayor’s Office of African American Male Engagement as a Credible Messenger and participate in the Group Violence Reduction Strategy (GVRS) as a (Community Moral Voice) CMV partner. My work involves supporting individuals who have caused harm and those who have been harmed by violence.

I also share my lived experience as part of the Maryland Equitable Justice Collaboration, working alongside the Office of the Attorney General and the Office of the Public Defender. I am involved in multiple collaborative efforts, including law enforcement partnerships, youth justice reform initiatives, reentry-focused committees, and prison and detention center reform efforts. I have served as a Johns Hopkins youth coordinator, completed the Baltimore City Police Reentry Program, and spoken at numerous juvenile facilities and prisons across the state about reentry and transformation. I regularly return to the institutions where I was incarcerated, where people tell me that my story gives them hope.

Senate Bill 162 is a common-sense and necessary technical correction to existing law. Under the current statute, if a child under 18 and an adult under 25 were arrested today as co-defendants, the young adult would likely be eligible for sentence review after 20 years, while the child would not. This result is fundamentally unfair. Children are uniquely capable of growth, change, and rehabilitation. The October 1, 2021 date restriction undermines the purpose of the Juvenile Restoration Act and must be removed.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to issue a favorable report on Senate Bill 162.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

**Earl Young**

**MD Catholic Conference\_SB 162\_FAV.pdf**

Uploaded by: Garrett O'Day

Position: FAV



MARYLAND  
CATHOLIC  
CONFERENCE

January 27, 2026

**SB 162**

**Criminal Procedure - Motion to Reduce Duration of Sentence - Repeal of Sentencing Date  
Limitation**

**Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee**

**Position: FAVORABLE**

The Maryland Catholic Conference offers this testimony in support of Senate Bill 162. The Catholic Conference is the public policy representative of the three (arch)dioceses serving Maryland, which together encompass over one million Marylanders. Statewide, their parishes, schools, hospitals and numerous charities combine to form our state's second largest social service provider network, behind only our state government.

In 2021, this legislative body passed Senate Bill 494, prohibiting a court from imposing a sentence of life without parole on a person who was less than eighteen years of age at the time the offense was committed. Furthermore, it would allowed a court to review a sentence for an offense committed under the age of eighteen after an individual has served twenty years of their sentence. The legislation dictates that courts must now consider factors such as age at the time of the offense, the nature of the offense, good behavior, academic achievement, family circumstances and demonstrated rehabilitative nature. The legislation, however, limited such review to offenses committed prior to October 21, 2021.

That aforementioned temporal limitation has posed a constitutional inconsistency, as Maryland's Second Look Act subsequently expanded the judicial review mechanism to include certain individuals who were ages 18 to 24 at the time of their offense. Thus, where individuals ages 18 to 24 receive an opportunity for review, individuals under 18 do not if the offense was committed after 2021. For example, if a 15-year-old child and 24-year-old adult 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.

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops has stated that "society must never respond to children who have committed crimes as though they are somehow equal to adults fully formed in conscience and fully aware of their actions." (*Responsibility, Rehabilitation, and Restoration: A Catholic Perspective on Crime and Criminal Justice*, USCCB, 2000)

Senate Bill 162 is an impactful technical correction and we thus request a favorable report.

# **SB 162 Motion to Reduce Duration of Sentence CCJR**

Uploaded by: Heather Warnken

Position: FAV



**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 162**

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

TO: Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee

FROM: **Center for Criminal Justice Reform, University of Baltimore School of Law**

DATE: January 23, 2026

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The University of Baltimore School of Law Center for Criminal Justice Reform supports community-driven efforts to improve public safety and address the harm and inequity caused by the criminal legal system. In alignment with this mission, **we offer our strong support of Senate Bill 162.**

Last year, the General Assembly passed the Maryland Second Look Act, allowing certain individuals 18-24 years old at the time of their offense to file a petition to reduce their sentence if they have served at least 20 years of the term of confinement. This important expansion of opportunity for judicial review includes the consideration of critical factors to determine that the individual does not pose a risk to the public, and that the interests of justice will be better served by a reduced sentence.

While an extremely important step forward for our state, unfortunately as passed, this legislation creates a harmful inconsistency that runs counter to the interests of justice and the data: allowing individuals ages 18 to 24 to receive an opportunity for review, but not individuals under the age of 18 at the time of their offense. This means, for example, that a child under 18 and a 24-year-old arrested today as co-defendants would face different outcomes under the current law. The 24-year-old would be eligible for sentence review after 20 years, while a 15-, 16- or 17-year-old would not. SB 162 is a straightforward and common-sense fix to address these disparities and ensure fundamental fairness, as well as compliance with the U.S. Constitution in sentencing review.

**Senate Bill 162 brings consistency with decades of U.S. Supreme Court precedent which has repeatedly emphasized that defendants who were convicted of crimes when they were children deserve greater not fewer opportunities to demonstrate their successful rehabilitation.** Since 2005, the U.S. Supreme Court has held on numerous occasions that the Eighth Amendment requires youth under the age of 18 to be sentenced with a focus on their potential for growth, maturity, and rehabilitation. In the twenty years since the landmark decision *Roper v. Simmons* (holding that the eighth amendment prohibits anyone from being sentenced to



death for a crime committed while the individual was under the age of 18), the Court has maintained that children must be provided with sentences that create a meaningful opportunity to obtain release based on a variety of factors such as maturity and rehabilitation.<sup>1</sup>

In 2012, the Court established that mandatory life sentences for crimes committed by individuals under 18 is a violation of the Eighth Amendment.<sup>2</sup> Once again, with a focus on the potential for rehabilitation, the Court in *Miller v. Alabama* emphasized that children have “greater prospects for reform” and that a mandatory life-without-parole sentence disregards the possibility of rehabilitation.<sup>3</sup>

It is clear from this precedent that the U.S. Constitution prohibits the extreme and disproportionate punishment of children. With a focus on the importance of rehabilitation, the U.S. Supreme Court has built a body of jurisprudence that favors creating mechanisms for the consideration of children, taking into account the vast research supporting their unique potential for growth and transformative change. Maryland’s current implementation of legislation which unintentionally harms or excludes them, while providing relief for older individuals including potential co-defendants, is an inconsistency that must be urgently fixed.

**We urge a favorable report on Senate Bill 162.**

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<sup>1</sup> *Roper v. Simmons*, 543 U.S. 551 (2005)

<sup>2</sup> *Miller v. Alabama*, 132 S. Ct. 2455 (2012)

<sup>3</sup> *Id.*

# **SB162 Testimony.pdf**

Uploaded by: John Sexton

Position: FAV

**Senate Bill 162** (Criminal Procedure – Motion to Reduce Duration of Sentence – Repeal of Sentencing Date Limitation)

**Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee**

Position: **Favorable**

January 23rd, 2026

Submitted by: **John Sexton**

To the Honorable members of the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee,

I would urge each of you to vote favorably on SB 162.

It is imperative that Maryland continues to strive for the redeeming of our youth - not only today, but for future generations. This addendum to the JRA ensures that those future generations have that opportunity.

As someone whose journey inside the Maryland prison system began as a teenager - and who spent 37 years straight atoning for the crime I committed - I can share with you that without the availability of this JRA mechanism, most of Maryland's youthful offenders charged as adults would be relegated to living a life filled with hopelessness and an inability to reach their incredible potential for reformation.

Once again, I urge you to **vote favorably on SB 162**.

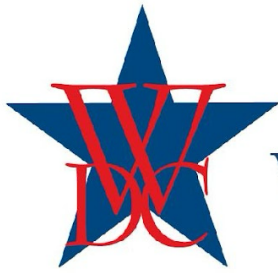
Shalom!

John Sexton

**SB162 - FAV - WDC - Jan 2026.pdf**

Uploaded by: Kate Stein

Position: FAV



MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND  
WOMEN'S DEMOCRATIC CLUB

P.O. Box 34047, Bethesda, MD 20827

[www.womensdemocraticclub.org](http://www.womensdemocraticclub.org)

**SB162 - Criminal Procedure - Motion to Reduce Duration of Sentence –  
Repeal of Sentencing Date Limitation  
Judicial Proceedings Committee January 27, 2026  
SUPPORT**

Thank you for this opportunity to submit testimony concerning an important priority of the **Montgomery County Women's Democratic Club (WDC)** for the 2026 legislative session. WDC is one of the largest and most active Democratic clubs in our county with hundreds of politically active members, including many elected officials. **WDC respectfully submits this testimony for the official record in support of Senate Bill 162.**

WDC proudly supported the 2021 passage of the Juvenile Restoration Act, which created a critical mechanism for sentencing review for individuals who were under 18 at the time of their offense.

SB 162 is a common sense, straightforward technical fix that ensures fairness in sentencing review by removing an arbitrary sentencing date limitation. It ensures that all children who were under 18 at the time of their offense have access to a meaningful opportunity for sentencing review—regardless of when they were sentenced.

Under current law, if a child under 18 and a young adult under 25 were arrested together today as co-defendants, the young adult could become eligible for sentence review after 20 years—while the child would not. This inconsistency is fundamentally unfair and runs counter to well established constitutional principles recognizing that children are different from adults for purposes of criminal sentencing. **SB 162 corrects this disparity and ensures that Maryland's sentencing review framework is applied fairly and consistently to children.**

**WDC urges a favorable report on SB 162.**

Cynthia Rubenstein  
WDC President

Lynn Olson  
WDC The Basics  
Subcommittee

Kate Stein  
WDC Advocacy Chair

**Choice FAV SB162 2026.pdf**

Uploaded by: Kelly Quinn

Position: FAV



**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)

# **SB162 Testimony .pdf**

Uploaded by: Ken Phelps Jr

Position: FAV



## **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*

# **SB162 MTsiongas.pdf**

Uploaded by: Magdalena Tsiongas

Position: FAV

**TESTIMONY ON SB162**  
**Criminal Procedure – Motion to Reduce Duration of Sentence –**  
**Repeal of Sentencing Date Limitation**

**Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee**  
**January 26, 2026**

**FAVORABLE**

Submitted by: Magdalena Tsiongas, MPH

Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher and members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee:

I submit this testimony to express my **SUPPORT for Senate Bill 162**. I am the founder of the MD Second Look Coalition, which I started on behalf of my partner who has been serving a life without parole sentence since age 19.

SB 162 is a simple bill that ensures fundamental fairness and compliance with the U.S. Constitution in sentencing review.

In 2021, the Juvenile Restoration Act (JRA) created a mechanism for Judges to review sentences for those who were children under 18 when convicted. However, the JRA limited this review mechanism to children who were sentenced prior to October 1, 2021. Last session, our coalition worked to pass the Maryland Second Look Act and the original bill language would have expanded this judicial sentence review for ALL individuals after serving 20 years of incarceration. However, the bill was amended to expand the judicial review mechanism only to include certain individuals who were ages 18 to 24 at the time of their offense (excluding those serving life without parole and others).

This amended bill which passed, has created an unconstitutional inconsistency, where some individuals incarcerated today ages 18 to 24 will receive an opportunity for sentence review in 20 years, 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.

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

People who have rehabilitated and reentered the community after being granted relief from the JRA have shown there is much value to be added to our communities with them being home. I ask that you show a commitment to fairness and justice and a belief in second chances.

I urge a favorable report on Senate Bill 162.

Thank you.

# **SB 0162 - JRA - REPEAL OF SENTENCING DATE LIMITATI**

Uploaded by: MARTINA HAZELTON

Position: FAV

January 27, 2026 @ 1:00pm (Senate Hearing)

Maryland General Assembly

Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

2 East

Miller Senate Office Building

Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: SB 0162 – Criminal Procedure – Motion to Reduce Duration of Sentence – Repeal of Sentencing Date Limitation

Position: **SUPPORT**

Please accept my written testimony in support of Senate Bill 0162. I am testifying on behalf of the Family Support Network (FSN). FSN is a network of individuals with incarcerated loved ones, returning citizens and advocates that support one another and serve as a voice for those behind the wall. I have the lived experience and remain near to those that are dealing with the daily challenges of having an incarcerated loved one. Most of the FSN returning citizens and those still serving are lifers or have life equivalent sentences.

SB 162 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 ages 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 don't exist. A meaningful opportunity for review should be available to all children under 18, regardless of when they were sentenced.

On behalf of myself and FSN, I hope that you will unequivocally support this bill and move it forward with a **favorable** vote.

Respectfully,

*Martina Hazelton*

Martina Hazelton

Co-Founder and Executive Director

□



Family Support Network (FSN)

3924 Minnesota Ave, NE

PO Box 64093

Washington, D.C. 20029

Website: [thefamilysupportnetwork.org](http://thefamilysupportnetwork.org)

# **SB162.docx.pdf**

Uploaded by: Melody Hession

Position: FAV



**Delaware-Maryland Synod**  
**Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**

Testimony Prepared for the  
Judicial Proceedings Committee  
on  
**Senate Bill 162**  
January 23, 2026  
Position: Favorable

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify. I am Reverend Melody Hession, assistant to the bishop for public policy in the Delaware-Maryland Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, a faith community with congregations in every part of the state.

As historical supporters of the Maryland Second Look Act, we join with those voices again to advocate for SB 162, which is a simple bill ensuring 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 ages 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.

In Maryland we have had an authorized congregation of incarcerated people, women and men, at Jessup since 1985, the Community of St. Dymas. The experience of our prison ministries is that there are prisoners who can be safely released into the community, and whose continued confinement would no longer serve any real purpose of justice.

We ask for a favorable report.

Rev. Melody Hession

**Michele Kennedy-Kouadio - Testimony SB 162 1\_23\_26**

Uploaded by: Michele Kouadio

Position: FAV

**Senate Bill 162**

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

January 23, 2026

POSITION: **SUPPORT**

Judicial Proceedings Committee

Submitted by: Michele Kennedy-Kouadio, Vice President, A Mother's Cry

Chair Smith, Vice-Chair Waldstreicher, and members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee:

A Mother's Cry respectfully submits this testimony for the official record to express our **SUPPORT for Senate Bill 162**. Our Maryland state prisons and juvenile detention centers are overpopulated. Insufficient staffing and deteriorating facilities discourage rehabilitation particularly for such young minds.

SB 162 is a simple bill that ensures fundamental fairness and compliance with the U.S. Constitution in sentencing review.

A Mother's Cry receives calls regularly from those who have loved ones serving time in Maryland prisons. We know intimately the hopelessness and heartache that comes from trying to support our children who are suffering in deteriorating facilities.

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

A Mother's Cry urges a favorable reporting on Senate Bill 162. Thank you for your serious consideration of this legislation.

Michele Kennedy Kouadio

Vice President

A Mother's Cry

# **Nable-Juris Testimony SB 162.pdf**

Uploaded by: Nikola Nable-Juris

Position: FAV



The CAMPAIGN for the  
FAIR SENTENCING  
of YOUTH

Bill: Senate Bill 162  
Title: Criminal Procedure – Motion to Reduce Duration of Sentence – Repeal of Sentencing Date Limitation  
Date: January 23, 2026  
Position: SUPPORT  
Committee: Judicial Proceedings Committee  
CONTACT: Nikola Nable-Juris, Campaign for the Fair Sentencing of Youth

Chair Smith, Vice-Chair Waldstreicher, and members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee:

The Campaign for the Fair Sentencing of Youth respectfully submits this testimony for the official record to express our **SUPPORT for Senate Bill 162**. We are grateful to Senator West for his leadership in introducing this bill and appreciate the Maryland General Assembly’s commitment to ensuring constitutional compliance in youth sentencing, which can be accomplished with this simple technical change.

The Campaign for the Fair Sentencing of Youth (“CFSY”) is a national coalition and clearinghouse that coordinates, develops, and supports efforts to implement age-appropriate alternatives to the extreme sentencing of America’s youth with a focus on abolishing life-without-parole and life-equivalent sentences for all children. We collaborate with policymakers, national and community organizations, and individuals directly impacted by these policies to develop solutions that keep communities safe while providing opportunities for children to reintegrate into society after demonstrated rehabilitation.

Senate Bill 162 modifies Maryland Criminal Procedure § 8-110 to remove the October 1, 2021, date restriction. In 2021, the Juvenile Restoration Act (JUVRA) passed and created a mechanism where children who were under 18 at the time of a criminal offense could petition a judge for sentencing review after serving 20 years.<sup>1</sup> JUVRA limited this review mechanism to children who were sentenced prior to October 1, 2021.<sup>2</sup>

Last session, the Second Look Act expanded JUVRA’s judicial review mechanism to include certain individuals who were ages 18 to 24 without imposing a date restriction for eligibility.<sup>3</sup> This has created an unconstitutional inconsistency, where the majority of individuals ages 18 to

24 receive an opportunity for review while youth under 18 sentenced after October 1, 2021, are ineligible for sentence review. The U.S. Supreme Court has decided a litany of cases over the last two decades which consistently affirm that children are different than adults for the purposes of criminal sentencing and which afford children greater constitutional protections in criminal sentencing than their adult counterparts.<sup>4</sup> Currently in Maryland, if a 15-year-old child and a 24-year-old individual were arrested as codefendants, in most situations the 24-year-old would receive sentencing review while the 15-year-old would not. This creates an unconstitutional framework where individuals over 18 receive greater protections than youth under 18, exposing the state to litigation risk.

SB 162 eliminates this disparity that disadvantages children by removing the arbitrary October 1, 2021, date restriction. SB 162 ensures that all children under 18, regardless of the date upon which they were sentenced, receive an opportunity for sentence review. Passing this simple technical fix would ensure fundamental fairness and constitutional compliance in criminal sentencing for youth under 18.

The Campaign for the Fair Sentencing of Youth urges a **favorable reporting on Senate Bill 162**. Thank you for your serious consideration of this legislation.

Nikola Nable-Juris  
National Legal and Policy Director  
Campaign for the Fair Sentencing of Youth

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<sup>1</sup> S.B. 494, 2021 Reg. Sess. (Md. 2021).

<sup>2</sup> Md. Crim. Pro. § 8-110(a)(2) (2024).

<sup>3</sup> H.B. 853, 2025 Reg. Sess. (Md. 2025).

<sup>4</sup> *Roper v. Simmons*, 543 U.S. 551 (2005) (finding the death penalty unconstitutional for children under 18); *Graham v. Florida*, 560 U.S. 48 (2010) (finding life-without-parole sentences for non-homicide offenses to be unconstitutional for children under 18); *Miller v. Alabama*, 567 U.S. 460 (2012) (finding mandatory life-without-parole sentences unconstitutional for children under 18); *Montgomery v. Louisiana*, 577 U.S. 190 (2016) (holding *Miller v. Alabama* applies retroactively to children under 18 who were previously sentenced to life without parole); *Jones v. Mississippi*, 593 U.S. 98 (2021) (addressing sentencing procedure for youth while reaffirming the core tenants of *Miller* and *Montgomery*).

# **O. Moyd Testimony - SB 162 - Repeal SLA Sentencing**

Uploaded by: Olinda Moyd, Esquire

Position: FAV



**January 27, 2026  
Senate – Judicial Proceedings Committee**

**Testimony in Support of SB 162 – Criminal Procedure – Motion to Reduce  
Duration of Sentence – Repeal of Sentencing Date Limitation**

**Submitted by Olinda Moyd, Esq.**

The Maryland Alliance for Justice Reform (MAJR) supports a favorable vote on SB 162. SB 162 is a simple bill that ensures fundamental fairness and compliance with the U.S. Constitution in sentencing review.

MAJR has supported legislation recently enacted providing resentencing mechanisms (JUVRA and SLA) and it is imperative that the law be applied equitably. In 2025, the General Assembly passed and the Governor signed into law the Maryland Second Look Act. Effective October 1, 2025, the Second Look Act amended CP § 8-110 to also allow certain individuals who have been imprisoned for at least 20 years for crimes that occurred when they were young adults (18-24) to file a motion to reduce their sentence if they meet the criteria. The legislation currently mandates that the individual be *sentenced for the offense before October 1, 2021*. The sentencing date limitation in the statute should be repealed to achieve fair and just sentencing opportunities for eligible individuals in Maryland.

The current legislation creates an unconstitutional inconsistency, where individuals ages 18 to 24 receive an opportunity for review only if they were sentenced before October 1, 2021, whereas individuals who were sentenced after this date do not. For example, if Mr. A and Mr. B are co-defendants and Mr. A was sentenced on September 30, 2021, and Mr. B was sentenced on October 2, 2021, Mr. A would be eligible for a sentencing review and, under the current legislation, Mr. B would not. After a decade and a half of U.S. Supreme Court jurisprudence emphasizing how children and young people are less culpable and more capable of change than adults for the purposes of criminal sentencing, it is contrary to Constitutional protections that individuals would be excluded merely based on a sentencing date limitation. Maryland laws must be fair and consistent to build societal trust, ensure equitable treatment, provide legal certainty and uphold respect for our criminal legal system.

SB 162 is a common-sense, straightforward technical fix to ensure these disparities don't exist. A meaningful opportunity for review should be available to all eligible individuals, regardless of when they were sentenced.

We urge a favorable reporting on Senate Bill 162. Thank you for your serious consideration of this legislation.

Olinda Moyd  
[moydlaw@yahoo.com](mailto:moydlaw@yahoo.com)  
[www.MA4jr.org](http://www.MA4jr.org)

**SB 162\_FAV\_ACLUMD.pdf**

Uploaded by: Olivia Spaccasi

Position: FAV



## Testimony for the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

January 27, 2026

### SB 162 – Criminal Procedure - Motion to Reduce Duration of Sentence - Repeal of Sentencing Date Limitation

#### FAVORABLE

OLIVIA SPACCASI  
PUBLIC POLICY  
ANALYST

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OFFICERS AND  
DIRECTORS  
Corey Stottlemyer  
PRESIDENT

DANA VICKERS  
SHELLEY  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

ANDREW FREEMAN  
GENERAL COUNSEL

The ACLU of Maryland urges a favorable report on SB 162 which seeks to close existing gaps in resentencing policy after the passage of the Second Look Act of 2025 and the Juvenile Restoration Act of 2021. The Second Look Act, as enacted, applies to those who committed certain crimes between the ages of 18-24. The Juvenile Restoration Act (JRA), as enacted, abolishes life without the possibility of parole for those under the age of 18 and allows people that have served at least 20 years of their sentence and who committed crimes before the age of 18 and were sentenced prior to October 1, 2021 the opportunity to petition the court for a sentence modification. These transformative laws have provided new opportunities and new hope for many incarcerated people. However, the retrospective nature of the Juvenile Restoration Act means that there are currently no meaningful resentencing paths for those who commit crimes before the age of 18 after October 1 2021. SB 162 would provide a common sense, technical fix to ensure those most in need of sentencing review would have that opportunity, creating parity across resentencing opportunities in Maryland.

Brain development continues throughout adolescence and into adulthood. The section of the brain responsible for mature thought, emotional regulation, judgment, and reasoning develop last in the frontal lobes. Adolescents are more likely to act on impulse without considering consequences and use their brains in a way that differs from adults.<sup>1</sup> These trends are reflected in data around criminal behavior which overwhelmingly shows that people age out of crime. Criminal behavior generally peaks during the late teens and early 20s and falls sharply in the years after.<sup>2</sup> Current law allows for the consideration of various factors in resentencing decisions for whom they currently apply. Among these are persons family and community circumstances at the time of the offense, including any history of trauma, abuse, or involvement in the child welfare system. For the cohort of individuals in question in SB 162, these factors are of particular relevance.

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<sup>1</sup> Grisso, T. "The Competence of Adolescents as Trial Defendants." *Psychology, Public Policy and Law*, 3:1, 1997.

<sup>2</sup> "The Older You Get: Why Incarcerating the Elderly Makes Us Less Safe." FAMM, Families for Justice Reform, [famm.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Aging-out-of-crime-FINAL.pdf](https://famm.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Aging-out-of-crime-FINAL.pdf).

Bias in Maryland’s criminal justice system against indigent defendants and Black people occurs at every stage: from the initial arrest to sentencing. This bill is necessary to provide a path for those who committed crimes as children to challenge extreme, biased, or inappropriate sentences.

There is also opportunity for safer prison environments with the potential opportunity to reduce sentences, as a compelling incentive to comply with facility rules while serving their time. In other words—the possibility of earning a sentence reduction may incentivize good behavior and thereby improve safety in the facilities.<sup>3</sup>

This bill builds on existing resentencing reforms that Maryland has rightly adopted in recent years - reforms grounded in the recognition that people mature, take accountability, and transform their lives. This understanding is particularly relevant when thinking about young people. The Maryland Second Look Act and the JRA allow people the opportunity to demonstrate their rehabilitation in front of a judge. This opportunity should be afforded to all people, particularly those who committed crimes during their adolescence.

For the foregoing reasons, ACLU of Maryland urges a favorable report for SB 162.

AMERICAN CIVIL  
LIBERTIES UNION  
FOUNDATION OF  
MARYLAND

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<sup>3</sup> *Stouffer v. Staton*, 152 Md. App. 586, 592 (2003).

**IPC Written Testimony SB 162 Favorable.pdf**

Uploaded by: Rachel Bennett

Position: FAV

**BILL:** Senate Bill 162

**FROM:** Maryland Office of the Public Defender (MOPD) Innocence Project Clinic at the University of Baltimore School of Law

**POSITION:** Favorable

**DATE:** January 23, 2026

The MOPD Innocence Project Clinic at the University of Baltimore School of Law respectfully requests that the Committee issue a favorable report on Senate Bill 162.

I am a member of the faculty and Director of the Innocence Project Clinic at the University of Baltimore, School of Law, and an assistant public defender. I am writing to urge the Committee to issue a favorable report on Senate Bill 162. The MOPD Innocence Project Clinic is a partnership between the Maryland Office of the Public Defender and the University of Baltimore School of Law. The Innocence Project Clinic represents wrongfully convicted individuals in legal challenges to their convictions and sentences. I have also had the privilege of representing juvenile lifers, and more recently those who are eligible to seek release under the Second Look Act.

Senate Bill 162 makes a simple fix to correct an inconsistency in existing law. The Juvenile Restoration Act, codified in Criminal Procedure Article § 8-110, allows an individual who was under 18 years of age at the time of the offense to petition the court for a reduction of sentence based on demonstrated rehabilitation after having served at least 20 years' incarceration. The current statute allows an individual who was a minor at the time of the offense to file such a petition only if the sentence was imposed prior to October 1, 2021, the date that the Juvenile Restoration Act took effect. Senate Bill 162 removes this requirement so that people convicted as minors have the same opportunity to seek resentencing as eligible individuals who were between 18 and 25 at the time of the offense. Without this fix, the law paradoxically affords worse treatment to those individuals convicted as minors.

This fix is also important to avoid unfair inconsistencies when a court has granted postconviction relief to correct a legal error in a sentence on a later date. In such a case where the court corrected an error in sentencing after 2021, current law arbitrarily bars relief for that individual under the Juvenile Restoration Act.

Senate Bill 162 continues a policy that has proven successful. To understand that the Juvenile Restoration Act works, we only need to look as far as the remarkable narratives of

personal transformation of those granted release.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, studies of juvenile lifers released after lengthy sentences show notable achievements and low rates of rearrest.<sup>2</sup> This correction in the statutory language also brings Maryland in line with neighboring jurisdictions, including Washington, D.C., that similarly recognize the wisdom of taking a second look at lengthy sentences imposed upon youth.<sup>3</sup>

When I first began working with juvenile lifers, I was immediately struck by their personal drive to succeed and roles they had taken on in prison. Many served as mentors and tutors for fellow inmates enrolled in college or GED programs. They were entrusted by prison staff to oversee the sewing shops that make uniforms for correctional workers and the metal furniture workshops that supply state office buildings. Anyone who has had the good fortune to cross paths with former juvenile lifers, as I have, knows that when these individuals leave prison they bring home their remarkable drive to succeed. Many have become advocates for their communities, substance abuse counselors, and credible messengers to youth. They are working hard to make their communities stronger and safer.

For these reasons, I request this Committee to issue a favorable report on Senate Bill 162.

Submitted by: Maryland Office of the Public Defender, Innocence Project Clinic at the University of Baltimore School of Law

Authored by: Rachel Bennett, Director  
MOPD Innocence Project Clinic at the University of Baltimore  
[rbennett@ubalt.edu](mailto:rbennett@ubalt.edu)

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<sup>1</sup> “The Juvenile Restoration Act: Year One –October 1, 2021 to September 30, 2022, Maryland Office of the Public Defender, October 2022, available at [https://opd.state.md.us/files/ugd/868471\\_e5999fc44e87471baca9aa9ca10180fb.pdf](https://opd.state.md.us/files/ugd/868471_e5999fc44e87471baca9aa9ca10180fb.pdf).

<sup>2</sup> “Life after life: Recidivism among individuals formerly sentenced to mandatory juvenile life without parole,” Sbeglia C, et.al. J Res Adolesc. 2025 March 35(1), <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC11758475/>.

<sup>3</sup> D.C. Code Ann. § 24-403.03(a)(2023) (permitting a reduction of sentence for a crime committed before the defendant’s 25th birthday after having served 15 years upon a finding that the defendant is not a danger to the community and the interests of justice warrant modification).

# **FINAL MD SB 162 Testimony - Logan Seacrest.pdf**

Uploaded by: Robert Melvin

Position: FAV



1411 K Street N.W., Suite 900  
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202.525.5717

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*www.rstreet.org*

Testimony from:

Logan Seacrest, Resident Fellow, Criminal Justice and Civil Liberties, R Street Institute

In SUPPORT of SB 162, “Criminal Procedure – Motion to Reduce Duration of Sentence – Repeal of Sentencing Date Limitation”

January 27, 2026

Judicial Proceedings Committee

Chair Smith, Vice-Chair Waldstreicher, and members of the committee,

My name is Logan Seacrest, and I am a research fellow in the Criminal Justice and Civil Liberties program at the R Street Institute, a nonprofit, nonpartisan public policy research organization. Our mission is to engage in policy research and outreach to promote free markets and limited, effective government. This is why the sentencing review provisions in Senate Bill 162 are of special interest to us.

We believe SB 162 is a necessary technical fix to ensure fundamental fairness and consistency in Maryland’s sentencing laws.

At present, the Maryland Second Look Act creates an arbitrary distinction in eligibility for judicial review. While the law allows certain individuals between the ages of 18 and 24 at the time of their offense to petition for a sentence reduction, it excludes those who were under the age of 18 if they were sentenced prior to October 1, 2021.<sup>1</sup> This has created an inconsistency in the law, where young adults are afforded an opportunity for review, while that same opportunity is denied to juveniles, despite the Supreme Court ruling the latter is less culpable under the law.<sup>2</sup>

For example, if a 15-year-old and a 24-year-old were arrested as co-defendants today, the 24-year-old would eventually be eligible for sentence review, while the 15-year-old would not. This discrepancy is not only constitutionally questionable, it represents a departure from the latest developmental science.

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<sup>1</sup> Md. Code Ann., Crim. Proc. § 8-110 (West 2021).

<sup>2</sup> *Roper v. Simmons*, Supreme Court of the United States, March 1, 2005, p. 569; *Miller v. Alabama*, Supreme Court of the United States, June 25, 2012, p. 471.



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The prefrontal cortex—responsible for decisions and impulse control—develops rapidly during adolescence, making teens more susceptible to negative influences, but also more responsive to behavioral interventions.<sup>3</sup> This higher level of “neuroplasticity” makes rehabilitation more effective in young children than in adults.<sup>4</sup> Continuing to incarcerate individuals who have demonstrated decades of rehabilitation when they no longer pose a threat to public safety is an inefficient use of state resources.

A limited, effective government should ensure that its mechanism for reviewing sentences is applied logically and equitably, rather than based on an arbitrary date. SB 162 resolves this oversight by removing the date restriction, ensuring that a meaningful opportunity for review is available to all individuals who were under 18 at the time of their offense.

We respectfully ask the committee to issue a favorable report on SB 162.

Thank you for your time,

Logan Seacrest  
Resident Fellow  
Criminal Justice and Civil Liberties  
R Street Institute  
[lseacrest@rstreet.org](mailto:lseacrest@rstreet.org)

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<sup>3</sup> Mariam Arain et al., “Maturation of the adolescent brain,” *Neuropsychiatric Disease and Treatment* 9 (April 2013), pp. 449-461. <https://doi.org/10.2147/NDT.S39776>.

<sup>4</sup> Lisa L. Weyandt et al., “Neuroplasticity in Children and Adolescents in Response to Treatment Intervention: A Systematic Review of the Literature,” *Clinical and Translational Neuroscience* 4:2 (July 2020), p. 21. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/2514183X20974231>.

# **JRA testimony.pdf**

Uploaded by: Robert Pittman

Position: FAV

My name is **Bobby Pittman**.

I was incarcerated at **17 years old** and sentenced as an adult before my brain was fully developed and before I fully understood the consequences of my actions.

While incarcerated, I made a decision: **I was going to change**.

I took every program available to me—education, personal development, counseling, and leadership programs. I didn't just participate; I became a **leader**. I mentored others, facilitated groups, and worked to create positive change inside a system not designed for growth.

I earned my **Bachelor's degree in Human Services**, not as a checkbox, but because I wanted to help people who came from the same circumstances I did.

After my release, those skills did not go to waste.

I now work with the **University of Baltimore's Second Chance College Program**, and I am **approved to go back inside the same prison where I was once housed** to support currently incarcerated students. I help them navigate education, planning for reentry, and building a future beyond incarceration.

I am also the **founder of Bullying Intervention Teams**, a **501(c)(3) nonprofit organization** focused on prevention, accountability, and community healing.

In addition, I am a **candidate for a Master's degree in Social Entrepreneurship**, preparing to expand this work and build sustainable, community-based solutions.

This is what rehabilitation looks like.

Yet under current law, access to resentencing can depend on **timing, not transformation**.

A young person sentenced before 2021 may have access to review, while someone sentenced after 2021—at the same age, for the same conduct—may not.

That is not justice.

Youth do not change based on a date on a calendar. Growth, accountability, and redemption are not time-stamped.

I am living proof that people sentenced as children can grow, change, and give back—**even inside the same institutions where they were once confined**. Our laws should reflect that truth for everyone.

Thank you for allowing me to share my story.

# **Testimony in Support of SB162 Citroni.pdf**

Uploaded by: Sara Citroni

Position: FAV

# Testimony in Support of SB162

**BILL: Senate Bill 162**

**TITLE:** Criminal Procedure – Motion to Reduce Duration of Sentence – Repeal of Sentencing Date Limitation

**DATE:** January 23, 2026

**POSITION: SUPPORT**

**COMMITTEE:** Judicial Proceedings Committee

**CONTACT:** Sara Citroni

Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of Senate Bill 162. My name is Sara Citroni, and I am writing in strong support of this bill, which provides a simple but essential technical correction to the Juvenile Restoration Act (JRA).

When the General Assembly passed the JRA in 2021, it created a mechanism for judicial review for individuals who were under 18 at the time of their offense. This reflected Maryland's recognition that children have a unique capacity for growth and change, and that extremely long sentences imposed on youth should be subject to meaningful review.

However, the JRA limited eligibility to individuals sentenced before October 1, 2021. That date restriction was never tied to public safety, rehabilitation, or the underlying purpose of the law. It was an administrative cutoff, not a policy judgment. As a result, two young people with identical circumstances can be treated differently for reasons that have nothing to do with their conduct or their capacity for change. SB162 corrects this inconsistency by removing the date restriction—nothing more.

This bill does not expand the law or loosen the review process. Judges have shown how seriously they weigh these decisions. SB162 simply corrects the date so that the same rigorous process applies to all children.

I also want to speak from personal experience. I am someone who was released under the Juvenile Restoration Act. Since coming home, I have worked hard to rebuild my life, continue my education, and contribute to my community. I now work with PREPARE to support others returning home, helping them navigate the same challenges I once faced. My experience reflects exactly what the JRA was designed to recognize: when young people are given a meaningful opportunity for review, many of us take that opportunity seriously and use it to build stable, productive lives.

And I want to be clear: I am not a unicorn. There are many of us who were sentenced as children, matured, and became better people because of who we are—not because incarceration made us better. Despite the circumstances, we grew, we changed, and we came home ready to contribute. Many of us who received judicial review under the JRA and are now home—working, parenting, studying, and giving back. We are living proof that the law works as intended. SB162 ensures that all children, not just those sentenced before an arbitrary date, have access to the same fair and consistent process.

Last session, the Maryland Second Look Act expanded judicial review to certain individuals who were 18 to 24 at the time of their offense. It is now possible for a 24-year-old to receive review after 20 years while a 15-year-old codefendant does not. SB162 simply ensures that children are not treated less fairly than young adults.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge a favorable report on SB162.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sara Citroni  
Prepare for Parole and Reentry  
sara@prepare-parole.org

# **SB162 Testimony SLao.pdf**

Uploaded by: Serena Lao

Position: FAV

**Senate Bill 162 (Criminal Procedure – Motion to Reduce Duration of Sentence – Repeal of Sentencing Date Limitation)**  
**Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee**  
**Hearing Date: January 27, 2026**

**Position: FAVORABLE**

Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee:

**I, Serena Lao, am submitting this testimony in support of SB 162.** My loved one was incarcerated for 37 years in Maryland prisons for a crime committed at the age of 16. The Juvenile Restoration Act (JRA) gave him and many others incredible hope when it passed in 2021, and every child who has spent at least 20 years incarcerated should have that same opportunity for a sentence *review* regardless of when they were sentenced.

This bill is a simple fix to legislation that is currently inconsistent and unfair. Right now, if a 15 year-old and a 24 year-old were arrested as co-defendants in a serious crime, the 24 year-old would be eligible for sentence review after 20 years, while the child would not. We know that there is plenty of research on brain development showing that young minds have the greatest capacity to develop and change. This is true of a child that was sentenced before October 1, 2021, and it is still true of a child sentenced on or after October 1, 2021. Repealing this sentencing date limitation would serve as a beacon of hope for those who, right now, are making choices during their incarceration to act out in hopelessness or commit themselves to a better path and work towards the possibility of a second chance one day.

Our communities have seen the positive impact of those who were granted a second chance through the JRA. So many returning citizens are playing a crucial role in violence prevention through meaningful mentorship and community efforts to reduce crime. This is what prevents the creation of more victims—not locking children up and throwing away the key. This straightforward bill is crucial to continuing the trajectory of this positive trend for years to come.

Thank you for reading, and I urge you to vote **favorably** on **SB 162**.

Sincerely,



Serena Lao  
serenalao16@gmail.com

# **SB162 Testimony SLao.pdf**

Uploaded by: Serena Lao

Position: FAV

**Senate Bill 162 (Criminal Procedure – Motion to Reduce Duration of Sentence – Repeal of Sentencing Date Limitation)**  
**Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee**  
**Hearing Date: January 27, 2026**

**Position: FAVORABLE**

Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee:

**I, Serena Lao, am submitting this testimony in support of SB 162.** My loved one was incarcerated for 37 years in Maryland prisons for a crime committed at the age of 16. The Juvenile Restoration Act (JRA) gave him and many others incredible hope when it passed in 2021, and every child who has spent at least 20 years incarcerated should have that same opportunity for a sentence *review* regardless of when they were sentenced.

This bill is a simple fix to legislation that is currently inconsistent and unfair. Right now, if a 15 year-old and a 24 year-old were arrested as co-defendants in a serious crime, the 24 year-old would be eligible for sentence review after 20 years, while the child would not. We know that there is plenty of research on brain development showing that young minds have the greatest capacity to develop and change. This is true of a child that was sentenced before October 1, 2021, and it is still true of a child sentenced on or after October 1, 2021. Repealing this sentencing date limitation would serve as a beacon of hope for those who, right now, are making choices during their incarceration to act out in hopelessness or commit themselves to a better path and work towards the possibility of a second chance one day.

Our communities have seen the positive impact of those who were granted a second chance through the JRA. So many returning citizens are playing a crucial role in violence prevention through meaningful mentorship and community efforts to reduce crime. This is what prevents the creation of more victims—not locking children up and throwing away the key. This straightforward bill is crucial to continuing the trajectory of this positive trend for years to come.

Thank you for reading, and I urge you to vote **favorably** on the **SB 162**.

Sincerely,



Serena Lao  
serenalao16@gmail.com

# Testimony 1.pdf

Uploaded by: Shabree McDonald

Position: FAV

**BILL:** Senate Bill 162

**TITLE:** Criminal Procedure – Motion to Reduce Duration of Sentence – Repeal of Sentencing Date Limitation

**DATE:** January 23, 2026

**POSITION:** SUPPORT

**COMMITTEE:** Judicial Proceedings Committee

Chair Smith, Vice-Chair Waldstreicher, and Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee:

**S.O.C.K. (Saving Our Communities & Kids)** respectfully submits this testimony in strong support of Senate Bill 162.

My name is **Diontre Stanton**, and I am currently incarcerated. I was a juvenile at the time of my arrest and conviction. I submit this testimony not only as someone directly impacted by this issue, but as a representative of S.O.C.K., an organization dedicated to rebuilding communities by addressing the root causes of violence, poverty, youth harm, and cycles of incarceration — beginning with youth first.

S.O.C.K. exists to assist urban communities in developing viable social and economic solutions for at-risk families, returning citizens, and youth using innovative approaches that go beyond traditional intervention. We believe meaningful rehabilitation, accountability, and opportunity — not permanent punishment — are what restore balance and safety to our communities.

SB 162 is a vital step toward fairness and constitutional compliance. Current law allows individuals ages 18 to 24 to seek sentence review while excluding those under 18 based solely on sentencing dates — despite decades of Supreme Court rulings recognizing that children are fundamentally different from adults in culpability and capacity for change. This creates an unjust and illogical disparity.

SB 162 does not guarantee release — it restores judicial discretion and provides youth sentenced as children a meaningful opportunity to demonstrate growth, rehabilitation, and readiness to contribute positively to society.

**We urge the Committee to issue a favorable report on Senate Bill 162 and advance this important legislation.**

Thank you for your serious consideration.

Respectfully,

**Diontre Stanton**

S.O.C.K. — Saving Our Communities & Kids

# Testimony 2.pdf

Uploaded by: Shabree McDonald

Position: FAV

**Shabree McDonald**

Wife of Diontre Stanton

**Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 162**

January 23, 2026

Judicial Proceedings Committee

Chair Smith, Vice-Chair Waldstreicher, and members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee:

I write to express my strong SUPPORT for Senate Bill 162. Although I am not a Maryland resident, I submit this testimony as the wife of Diontre Stanton, who was a juvenile at the time of his arrest and conviction. I have witnessed firsthand how deeply childhood sentencing decisions impact not only the individual, but entire families and communities.

SB 162 is a common-sense fix that restores fairness to Maryland's sentencing laws. Under current law, young adults under 25 can seek sentence review after 20 years, while children under 18 — who courts recognize as even more capable of growth and rehabilitation — are excluded based solely on sentencing dates. This contradiction denies children a meaningful opportunity to demonstrate change.

No child should be permanently defined by the worst moment of their youth. This bill does not guarantee release — it restores judicial discretion and ensures children have access to review based on growth, accountability, and rehabilitation.

I respectfully urge the Committee to favorably report Senate Bill 162.

Thank you for your consideration,

**Shabree McDonald**

# **Emergence Inc. Testimony - In Support of Senate Bi**

Uploaded by: Tavon Elsezy-Young

Position: FAV

**BILL: Senate Bill 162**

TITLE: Criminal Procedure – Motion to Reduce Duration of Sentence – Repeal of Sentencing Date Limitation

DATE: January 23, 2026

POSITION: **SUPPORT**

COMMITTEE: Judicial Proceedings Committee

CONTACT: Tavon ElsezyYoung / Emergence Incorporated

Chair Smith, Vice-Chair Waldstreicher, and members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee:

Emergence Incorporated respectfully submits this testimony for the official record to express our **SUPPORT for Senate Bill 162**. Our organization is committed to the advocacy and advancement of youth to be afforded second and third chances to recover lives of hope, purpose, and destiny. Emergence Inc.'s support for this bill sits at the core of organizations purpose to see the vulnerable and less fortunate emerge from dark and obscure pasts to recover a bright future.

SB 162 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 ages 18 to 24 receive an opportunity for review while individuals under 18 do not. For example, if a 15-year-old child and a 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 don't exist. A meaningful opportunity for review should be available to all children under 18, regardless of when they were sentenced.

Simply put, if the heart of the Maryland Second Look Act is to provide an opportunity to reassess criminal penalties, evaluate the current standing of young offenders, and consider the future potential of individuals sentenced at an early age, why would Maryland, in good conscience, exclude youth offenders under 18? We have the opportunity to right this wrong.

We urge a favorable reporting on Senate Bill 162. Thank you for your serious consideration of this legislation.

Sincerely,

Tavon Elsezy-Young, CEO & Executive Director  
Emergence Incorporated  
*Emerge-Gents*

**2026\_01\_21 SB 162 Motion to Reduce Duration of Sen**

Uploaded by: Tiffany Clark

Position: FAV

**CAROLYN A. QUATTROCKI**  
*Chief Deputy Attorney General*

**LEONARD J. HOWIE III**  
*Deputy Attorney General*

**CARRIE J. WILLIAMS**  
*Deputy Attorney General*

**SHARON S. MERRIWEATHER**  
*Deputy Attorney General*

**ZENITA WICKHAM HURLEY**  
*Deputy Attorney General*



**PETER V. BERNS**  
*General Counsel*

**CHRISTIAN E. BARRERA**  
*Chief of Staff*

**STATE OF MARYLAND**  
**OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL**

**ANTHONY G. BROWN**  
*Attorney General*

January 27, 2026

**TO:** The Honorable William Smith  
Chair, Judicial Proceedings Committee

**FROM:** Tiffany Clark  
Director, Legislative Affairs, Office of the Attorney General

**RE:** Senate Bill 162 – Criminal Procedure - Motion to Reduce Duration of Sentence - Repeal of Sentencing Date Limitation

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The Office of the Attorney General (OAG) supports **Senate Bill 162 – Criminal Procedure - Motion to Reduce Duration of Sentence - Repeal of Sentencing Date Limitation**. SB 162 proposes to eliminate the October 1, 2021 effective date limitation in the Juvenile Restoration Act's sentence reduction provisions, ensuring consistent eligibility for all defendants who committed crimes while under age 18.

As Maryland's elected Chief Legal Officer, the Attorney General supervises and directs the legal business of the State. The OAG advises and represents State institutions, agencies, boards, commissions, and officials, while representing Maryland's interests in state and federal litigation. The OAG uses its authority to enforce the rule of law, protect Marylanders, and promote the public good.

This legislation directly supports our efforts to ensure fairness and consistency in Maryland's criminal justice system, particularly regarding sentencing opportunities for individuals who committed offenses as juveniles.

When the Juvenile Restoration Act (JUVRA) was enacted in 2021, it created two distinct pathways based on sentencing date. For defendants sentenced on or after October 1, 2021, courts were not required to adhere to mandatory minimums and were prohibited from imposing life without parole under § 6-235 of the Criminal Procedure Article. For defendants sentenced before that date, JUVRA established a sentence reduction mechanism under § 8-110 of the Criminal

Procedure Article available after the defendant had served at least 20 years. The date limitation making sentence reduction available only to juvenile defendants sentenced before October 1, 2021, was logical at the time because juvenile defendants sentenced after October 2021 would benefit from § 6-235's protections.

However, the passage of the Second Look Act in 2025 (2025 Md. Laws ch. 96) created an unintended incongruity. Under current law as established by the Second Look Act, defendants aged 18-25 at the time of their crime, regardless of their sentencing date, may seek a sentence reduction after serving 20 years under § 8-110. Yet defendants under age 18 who committed crimes after October 1, 2021 fall into a gap: they are excluded from the Second Look Act (which applies only to those over age 18) and from JUVRA's sentence reduction provisions (due to the date limitation). This results in the outcome that juvenile defendants now have fewer opportunities for sentence consideration than young adult defendants.

SB 162 corrects this inequity by removing the October 1, 2021 date restriction, ensuring that all defendants who were under 18 at the time of their offense have access to the sentence reduction process established by JUVRA. This creates appropriate parity with the Second Look Act's treatment of young adult defendants and reflects the General Assembly's recognition that individuals who commit offenses during adolescence warrant special consideration in sentencing.

We appreciate the General Assembly's work on this important issue and appreciate the opportunity to share our perspective. For the foregoing reasons, the Office of the Attorney General respectfully urges the Committee to give Senate Bill 162 **a favorable report**.

Cc:

# **WilliamHamilton\_Testimony (1).pdf**

Uploaded by: William Hamilton

Position: FAV

Bill: Senate Bill 162  
Title: Criminal Procedure – Motion to Reduce Duration of Sentence – Repeal of  
Sentencing Date Limitation  
Date: January 23, 2026  
Position: SUPPORT  
Committee: Judicial Proceedings Committee

My name is William Hamilton and I am a resident of District 45. SB 162 provides youth who have made poor, reckless decisions in their past an opportunity for redemption, and a chance to become healthy, engaged taxpayers..

It is a simple and much needed fix. I urge the Committee to issue a favorable report on SB 162. Thank you for your consideration.

Mr. William Hamilton

# **Unfavorable against SB 162.pdf**

Uploaded by: Joanna Mupanduki

Position: UNF



Continuing the Missions of the Stephanie Roper Committee and Foundation, Inc.

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301-952-2319 (fax)

1 North Charles Street, Suite 700  
Baltimore, MD 21201  
410-234-9885 (phone)

January 23, 2026

Re: Unfavorable to SB 162

Dear Chair Smith and Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee,

On behalf of the Maryland Crime Victims' Resource Center, Inc. (MCVRC), I respectfully request an unfavorable report on Senate Bill 162. MCVRC provides legal services to crime victims throughout Maryland and is among the largest nonprofit organizations of its kind in the nation. In the past year alone, we assisted more than 1,300 new victims and surviving family members. We write on behalf of our clients—families who did not choose violence, but who live every day with the permanent consequences of murders committed by juvenile offenders.

SB 162 would repeal the October 1, 2021 sentencing date limitation contained in the Juvenile Restoration Act (SB 494), substantially expanding eligibility for sentence modification for individuals convicted as adults of offenses committed when they were minors. When SB 494 was enacted and took effect in October 2021, the General Assembly made a deliberate and carefully balanced policy choice. The Act applied only to individuals sentenced **before** that date, allowing up to three sentence modification hearings **after 20 years of incarceration**, while reforming juvenile sentencing practices prospectively.

Importantly, the Juvenile Restoration Act was not limited to post-conviction relief. It also:

- Prohibited the imposition of life without the possibility of parole for individuals under the age of 18 at the time of the offense; and
- Authorized courts to depart downward from mandatory minimum sentences when sentencing minors charged as adults.

These reforms already account for the reality that **sentences imposed today are significantly less severe than those imposed twenty or more years ago**. Individuals sentenced after October 1, 2021 benefit from these changes at the front end, at the time of sentencing.

It is also critical to recognize that individuals convicted of serious crimes already have **multiple avenues through which their sentences may be reviewed or reduced**, including parole consideration, executive clemency, and other existing post-conviction mechanisms. The existence of these opportunities does not justify continually adding new layers of review that require victims and surviving family members to repeatedly relive their trauma. At some point, repeated reconsideration becomes less about justice and more about imposing ongoing emotional harm.

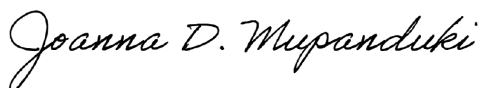
Victims did not choose what happened to them. They did not choose the violence inflicted upon their loved ones or themselves. In contrast, in the most serious violent offenses—including murder—defendants made deliberate choices: choices about whether to act violently, the means used, the victim targeted, the location of the crime, and the timing. Often, these choices were made with the intent to avoid detection or silence witnesses. These are not impulsive or abstract harms; they are intentional acts that forever alter—and often end—human lives.

For victims, sentencing represents a moment of accountability and stability. Repeated resentencing proceedings—often decades later and frequently with limited notice—force victims to continually reengage with the person who caused irreparable harm and with the circumstances of the crime itself. SB 162 would expand this retraumatization, particularly in cases involving the most violent offenses, without sufficient regard for the cumulative and lasting impact on victims.

MCVRC supports thoughtful criminal justice reform and acknowledges the importance of rehabilitation. However, we do not believe that continually expanding retroactive resentencing opportunities serves the interests of justice, public safety, or victims' rights. The current statutory framework already reflects significant reform while preserving essential finality and dignity for victims.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge the Committee to issue an **unfavorable report on SB 162**. Thank you for your time, consideration, and continued commitment to Maryland's crime victims.

Respectfully,



Joanna D. Mupanduki, Esq.  
Deputy Director  
Maryland Crime Victims Resource Center, Inc.

# **Letter in Opposition SB162.pdf**

Uploaded by: Laura Wilt

Position: UNF



Maryland Crime Victims' Resource Center, Inc.

Continuing the Missions of the Stephanie Roper Committee and Foundation, Inc.

☎ 877-VICTIM-1 (877-842-8461) ✉ [mail@mdcrimevictims.org](mailto:mail@mdcrimevictims.org) 🌐 [mdcrimevictims.org](http://mdcrimevictims.org)

## LETTER IN OPPOSITION OF SENATE BILL 162

January 23, 2026

### Headquarters

1001 Prince George's Boulevard  
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301-952-0063  
877-842-8461 (toll free)  
240-929-0526 (fax)

### Baltimore

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Suite 700  
Baltimore, MD 21201

### Carroll, Howard, & Baltimore Counties

Oakland Manor  
5430 Vantage Point Road  
Columbia, MD 21044  
240-335-4032

### Eastern Shore

240-335-4012

### Frederick & Montgomery Counties

240-335-4021

### Southern Maryland

301-952-0063

### Western Maryland

59 Prospect Square  
Suite 6  
Cumberland, MD 21502  
240-335-4013

The Maryland Crime Victims' Resource Center (MCVRC) urges an unfavorable vote on SB 162.

The 2021 Juvenile Restoration Act (JRA) permits youth convicted in adult court before October 2021 to petition for sentence modification three times after serving 20 years. The JRA also prohibits life without parole for those under 18 and allows courts to waive mandatory minimums for juvenile offenders. These three modification hearings were not found appropriate for post-2021 cases, recognizing the multiple reforms.

Post-JRA (10/1/2021), Maryland case law and Sentencing Guidelines already direct judges to consider a defendant's youth, brain development, mental/physical condition, health, and rehabilitation potential—departing below guidelines when appropriate. Brain science is now standard in sentencing, as affirmed by U.S. Supreme Court precedents like *Miller v. Alabama* and state cases.

The JRA stemmed from testimonials that pre-2021 courts ignored or did not give enough weight to offenders' youthful brains and impulsivity. Adolescent neurodevelopment is a concept now fully embedded in Maryland sentencing. To pass SB 162 is to ignore that and make a choice to further disempower and ignore the pain of victims.

SB 162 disrespects these judicial safeguards and, above all, the victims of violent crime. Finality in sentencing provides essential closure, allowing survivors to heal from unimaginable trauma. Multiple modification hearings decades later force victims to relive their pain repeatedly, prioritizing offenders over irreversible harm to Maryland families.

As the nation's largest nonprofit providing legal services to crime victims, MCVRC speaks for Maryland survivors. We urge an unfavorable vote on SB 162, which ignores victims' suffering and the robust protections already in place.

Sincerely,

Laura Corbett Wilt, Senior Supervising Attorney  
240-335-4004; [lwilt@mdcrimevictims.org](mailto:lwilt@mdcrimevictims.org)

Joined by: Joanna Mupanduki, Deputy Director & Kurt Wolfgang, Executive Director

# **MCVRC**

Uploaded by: Roberta Roper

Position: UNF

**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.