

**TESTIMONY ON HB724
MARYLAND SECOND LOOK ACT**

**House Judiciary Committee
February 13, 2024**

SUPPORT

Submitted by: **Atoya Fletcher**

Chair Clippinger, Vice Chair Bartlett and members of the Judiciary Committee:

I, Atoya Fletcher am testifying in support of HB724, the Maryland Second Look Act. I am submitting this testimony as an **impacted family member.**

I support this bill from 2 different perspectives. 1-As a former Correctional Officer, I had the chance to be face to face with some of the individuals that were actually incarcerated and I had the chance to see most of them change and evolve from the person that they once were. I have seen most rehabilitate themselves by helping others such as the youth get their lives straight so that they won't continue to make the same mistakes that they made and by becoming involved in programs designed especially for reform. The prisons now have a Certified Peer Recovery Specialist Program, Smart Recovery and Conflict Resolution Programs that will prepare these incarcerated individuals with the knowledge to help others from becoming victims & perpetrators. 2-As someone who has a loved one that is locked up. Although I agree that if you commit a crime you must be punished but what is a punishment if you do not learn from it? The prisons themselves are just a place to house incarcerated individuals until their sentence is up, they are not teaching these individuals to be better it's something that they must want and learn on their own. They must want to sign up for the programs and want to change. Once a person has decided to be a better person and put forth the effort to change then that is when the punishment has been fulfilled. The whole point of the prison system is to reform and rehabilitate. Once that has been accomplished there should be a chance for redemption. Redemption to prove to the world that they are not the same person that they once were. I believe that a number of individuals fit this description and should be given a second chance to prove themselves. I support this bill for those with a good prison record, the time served requirement and strong signs of improvement.

For these reasons, I encourage you to vote favorably on the Maryland Second Look Act HB724.

Thank you for your time on this matter.