



OFFICE OF THE STATE'S ATTORNEY FOR BALTIMORE CITY

February 13, 2024

The Honorable Luke Clippinger, Chairman
House Judiciary Committee
6 Bladen Street, House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: HB724 – Criminal Procedure – Petition to Reduce Sentence

Good afternoon Chairman Clippinger and Members of the House Judiciary Committee:

My name is Ivan Bates, the State's Attorney for Baltimore City, and I am writing to express my full support for HB724 – Criminal Procedure – Petition to Reduce Sentence. This proposed legislation is crucial to providing a pathway for individuals serving terms of confinement to seek a reduction in their sentence under specific circumstances.

Adding a "Second Look" mechanism, as outlined in HB724, is a significant step forward in ensuring fairness and justice within Maryland's legal system. Currently, limited mechanisms in place allow for a sentence review by a judge after decades of incarceration. The existing limitations, where sentence modifications can only be considered within a five-year window, fail to account for the potential of rehabilitation over a more extended period of time.

The readiness of the Office of the Baltimore City State's Attorney to handle Second Look cases is a testament to the preparedness of our legal system to implement this law effectively. Our office's capacity to manage these cases indicates that the passage of HB724 will not overwhelm our judicial system but instead provide an avenue for just and thoughtful consideration of sentence reductions.

It is essential to recognize that justice can sometimes be best served by modifying extreme sentences, particularly when individuals have demonstrated rehabilitation and no longer pose a threat to public safety. The belief that rehabilitation be valued over indefinite incarceration aligns with the principles of fairness, compassion, and the potential for redemption.

By enacting HB724, Maryland can demonstrate its commitment to promoting rehabilitation, reducing recidivism and fostering a more equitable criminal justice system. Establishing clear procedures for petition proceedings will enhance transparency, accountability and trust within our legal institutions.



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In conclusion, I urge you to support HB724 and advocate for its passage. Let us seize this opportunity to ensure that our legal system reflects our values of fairness, compassion, and justice for all.

Yours in service,

Ivan J. Bates

Ivan J. Bates
State's Attorney for Baltimore City

Submitted By: Hassan Giordano
Chief, External Affairs