

**TESTIMONY ON SB291
MARYLAND SECOND LOOK ACT**

**Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
January 30, 2025**

SUPPORT

Submitted by: Sonia Shah

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

I, Sonia Shah, am testifying in support of SB291, the Maryland Second Look Act. I am submitting this testimony as a community member who lives in Towson, MD.

Passage of the Maryland Second Look Act would create a meaningful opportunity for sentence modification for incarcerated people after having served 20 years of their sentence. I firmly believe that those individuals who are able to demonstrate their growth and rehabilitation, such that they are no longer a threat to public safety, should have the opportunity for release.

This bill is an important tool in making meaningful opportunities for release happen, as currently, incarcerated people in MD can only petition the Court for modification within 90 days of sentencing, severely limiting any potential sentence modifications¹. Maryland judges used to have the ability to review sentences, an important safety valve for extreme sentences, but this opportunity was eliminated with a rule change in 2004². Furthermore for more than 25 years, Maryland's parole system was not available to people serving life with parole sentences. Now, the Governor has finally been removed from the parole process, but this is not enough to remedy decades of wrongful denials which contributed to the bloated prison system and its extreme racial disparities.

I encourage you to vote favorably on the Maryland Second Look Act SB291.

Thank you.

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¹ Maryland Rule 4-345

² [Court of Appeals of Maryland Rules Order](#)