

Jason Allen, #356415  
Jessup Correctional Institution

Re: Support for the Maryland Second Look Act

To the House and Senate Judiciary Committees,

As a 41 year old man with roughly 17 years in and beginning my first adult incarceration at 24 years old, my lived experience has me believe that this is the legislature needed to change our communities. I am much different than I was at 24 and I've watched many changes throughout my incarceration. As a minister and Certified Peer Recovery Specialist, I look for the inspiration that revives hope in this hopeless environment. Transitions from gang leaders to gang emancipators and drug dealer to pastor are real. But people need the hope to do so. Many of the men I refer to are big fish in a small pond, working in prison to address social issues that legislators across the nation fail to address in the past. Knowing that their greatest value is being utilized to prevent future crimes before they occur rather than picking up the pieces of people afterwards. We must critique the apathy towards this population that renders them underutilized.

The Kerner Report of President Ford's administration of the past acknowledged that incarceration and utilization of the justice system to address social issues harms black community's. Strom Thurmond and Ronald Reagan intentionally sought to criminalize being black. This was exacerbated later on by calls from Black legislators to incarcerate those in their communities by the government. Essentially, apathy towards the plight of marginalized Blacks who strive through adverse childhood experiences to survive is the social issue that our nation struggles with today.

Prison is where society sends those who've needed the most support, failed, or they don't know what to do with. This is not meant to diminish personal accountability as long sentence server to address this point. However, the macro-level illustrates the societal need for us. As the current model doesn't work and does more harm socially as well as economically. Empowering those who fight for a second chance to have hope in a better possibility. We have the training, lived experience, and desire to address social issues in our communities that the police do not. Thank you for this opportunity to convey the importance of recognizing the Incarcerated Citizens as assets to better develop our communities through Second Chances.

In Jesus Name,

Jason Allen

Steven S. Carrow 1941106  
JCI P.O. Box 534  
Jessup, Maryland 20794  
January 10, 2025

**To: The Maryland General Assembly Judicial Proceedings and Judiciary Committees**

**IN FAVOR for the Criminal Procedure – Petition to Reduce Sentence**

My name is Steven Carrow and I have been a Maryland resident my entire life. I've served in the U.S. Marine Corps and I am a Gulf War Veteran. I am serving a life sentence and have been incarcerated for the past 2 1/2 decades. I have been a productive incarcerated citizen with an impeccable institution record.

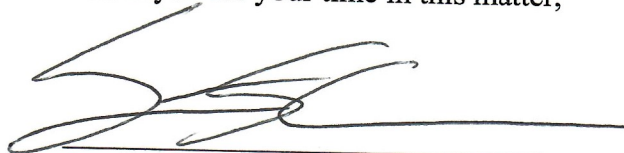
Maryland Law promulgates the objectives of sentencing as being for: punishment, deterrence, and **rehabilitation**. See Cruz-Qunitanilla v. State, 455 Md. 35, 40 (2017)(citing Smith. v. State, 308 Md. 162, 166 (1986)). The Supreme Court of the United States ("SCOTUS") has delineated that judges are the ones who must keep their eye on rehabilitation regarding sentencing. See, Jennings v. State, 399 Md. 675, 683-84 (1985) (citing United States v. Grayson, 738 U.S. 41, 45 (1978) (quoting Williams v. New York, 337 U.S. 241, 248, (1948) ("sentences should be determined with an eye toward the reformation and rehabilitation of offenders")))).

The General Assembly has created legislation giving judges the power to punish. By giving them the power to sentence. The Legislature has given judges the power to deter criminal defendants. When they legislated that judges may order those sentences to be served under the custody of the Commissioner of Corrections. However, Legislature has yet to give judges the power to keep their eye on rehabilitation. This Bill shall give judges that power for rehabilitation.

Since the SCOTUS stated that judges are responsible for keeping their eye on **rehabilitation**. The Supremacy Clause dictates that MARYLAND'S Legislature create a statute. Which gives **every criminal defendant** the right to file for a sentence reduction. Regardless of their age; regardless of the crimes of which they were convicted. And, regardless of the amount of time they have served.

Once again, I am asking for a **FAVORABLE VOTE** for the Criminal Procedure – Petition to Reduce Sentence

Thank you for your time in this matter,



Steven S. Carrow 1941106



Jason Allen, #356415

Jessup Correctional Institution

**Re:** Support for the Maryland Second Look Act

To the House and Senate Judiciary Committees,

My lived experience of coming into prison at 24 and with 17 years in on Life leads me to believe that the Maryland Second Look Act is needed to change our communities for the better. I am not the same and have changed throughout my incarceration. As a minister and Certified Peer Recovery Specialist, I look for the inspiration that revives hope in this hopeless environment. I am not an aberration. Transitions from gang leaders to gang emancipators and drug dealers to pastors are real. But people need the hope to do so and the living receipts to see what they could lose and what is possible if they change. Many of the men I refer to are big fish in a small pond. They advocate and work in prison to address social issues that legislators across the nation failed to address. Knowing that their greatest value is them being utilized to prevent crimes out of love rather than picking up the pieces of people afterwards, we must critique the apathy towards this population that renders them underutilized.

During President Ford's administration, the Kerner Committee issued a report acknowledging that incarceration and utilization of the justice system to address social issues harms Black communities. Strom Thurmond and Richard Nixon intentionally sought to criminalize being Black with "The Southern Strategy". This was exacerbated later by calls from Black legislators to incarcerate those in their communities selling or using drugs intentionally funneled there by the government. Apathy towards the plight of marginalized Blacks who strive through Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES) to survive is the critical social issue that our nation struggles with today.

Prison is where society sends those who've needed the most support, failed to support, or send who they don't know what to do with. This is not meant to diminish personal accountability as long sentences served addresses this point. However, the macro-level illustrates the societal need for us. As the current model doesn't work and does more harm socially as well as economically, empowering those who desire a second chance increases the possibility of a better outcome for everyone. We have the training, lived experience, and desire to address social issues in our communities that the police do not. Thank you for this opportunity to convey the

importance of recognizing the Incarcerated Citizens as assets to better develop our communities through Second Chances.

In Jesus Name,

Jason Allen

TO: Honorable State Senators and Representatives  
FROM: Richard McLeod, #190814  
RE: Testimony for Second Look  
DATE: January 9, 2025

Dear Sirs and Ma'ams,

To all the Honorable Senators and Representatives for the great State of Maryland I extend salutations. Additionally, I wish to thank you in advance for this opportunity to speak on behalf of the passage of the Second Look Act in its original form.

My name is Richard "Hanif" McLeod. I am a State Certified Peer Recovery Specialist, and have been incarcerated since 1987, nearly four decades. I am serving a Life without parole sentence for Felony Murder; a crime for which I am both actually and factually innocent.

I would like to take a moment to say that I am in support of returning the discretionary authority of modifying criminal sentences to the judiciary. Judges have the unique ability to take all factors of a given case and balance the interests of all parties to insure a just outcome.

As you are already aware, it is well established law that the intent behind the original adjudication of a given crime is to address the interests of the victim, the community at large, as well as the defendant. The Judge is charged with the duty to address punishment, deterrence, and rehabilitation. This principal is validated by the Supreme Court when they said that Judges sentence with an eye towards rehabilitation. We can see clearly that the courts have seen to the first two principals in the original sentence of offenders. Where-as, they have lost the jurisdiction over those same cases involving lengthy terms of confinement. In what world is a Court going to give genuine consideration to changing a sentence where the victims and the community is still very much in their healing processes.

I would like to make Two final points. The first: is that the passage of this Act is in no way a magic wand that releases *anyone* from prison. It simply enables a Court to review the history of an incarcerated person to determine if there is evidence of rehabilitation supporting the possibility of modifying his or her term of confinement. And second: There are sufficient amounts of data that show:

- a) that once individuals have twenty or more years into their sentence's they have diminished the level of criminal behavior substantially from their youth and there-by present a significantly reduced threat to the community; and
- b) that the comparative benefit of continued incarceration for individuals who have often decades of demonstratable rehabilitation far outweighs any punitive value.

There are many other reasons that validate the over-all need and benefit of passing this Bill. I won't belabor the point by restating them. I wish to simply state that there are many inside, as well as outside of the Maryland Prison system that will profit from its passage. We are currently trying to address a major budget concern for our State. The millions of tax-payer dollars that will be saved by the passage of the Second Look in itself will significantly aid in solving some of those concerns.

In closing, I wish to again thank all of you for the work that you do for this State. I want to say that I whole-heartedly support the passage of the Second Look Act as is.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Richard L. McLeod". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Richard" being more prominent.

Richard L. McLeod, C.P.R.S.

Cc; rlm

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