



## Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland

### Testimony in Support of HB 853- Second Chance Act

TO: Delegate Luke Clippinger, Chair and Members of the Judiciary Committee  
FROM: Karen “Candy” Clark,  
Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland Criminal Justice Lead  
DATE: February 18, 2025

I am Candy Clark, the lead advocate with the Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland, requesting your support for **HB 853- Second Chance Act**. We believe in everyone’s inherent worth and dignity and that “One size doesn’t fit all.”

Bill **HB 853** aligns with this slogan and our beliefs.

This bill offers an opportunity for a reduced sentence to those behind the prison walls who have demonstrated that they have diligently worked hard to transform their previous lifestyle. They must prove that they have developed respect for themselves, others, and the value of community. Some of these requirements include that the individual has substantially complied with the rules of the correctional institution and participated in educational, vocational or other self expansive learnings

If they have served at least 20 years of confinement, they may apply to the court for a shorter sentence. However—if rejected—they must wait three years before they will get a second chance, and they only get three chances in total.

They will meet stiff requirements and not everyone is able to meet this challenge.

However, when the requirements of the application have been accepted. the court may proceed.

A revaluation of the age of the offender and nature of the offence along with study of the person’s characteristics in terms of maturity, rehabilitation, fitness to reenter society are reviewed

Consideration to the victim’s comments, results of a physical, behavioral and mental check ups are included The individual and the victim both receive notice of the coming hearing date; with the state able to support or oppose its decision.

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This program was first used at the Federal level in 2009 to organizations in 49 states. It is estimated that 164,000 people were served. 95% of state prisoners will eventually be returned to their communities but with this **HB 853** people will have a path to shorten their time, which gives them incentive and HOPE.

Please support **HB 853**.

Respectfully submitted,

*Karen Clark*

UULM-MD Criminal Justice Lead Advocate

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