

Committee: House and Senate Judiciary Proceedings Committee Favorable Support

My name is Janet Johnson. I am currently incarcerated at Maryland's Correctional Institution for Women. I entered the system as an emerging adult at the age of 18 and at 19 was sentenced to 25 years to life with the possibility of parole.

The scientific community recognizes emerging adults as adolescents between the ages of 18 - 25. Youth between the ages of 18 -25 are classified as emerging adults because, while they have exceeded the age required for classification as a juvenile, their brain hasn't reached the stage of development required to classify them as an adult. Farrington, Loeber and Howell explain in their research article Young Adult Offenders that the higher executive functions of the brain, which includes planning, verbal memory and impulse control, are not usually developed fully until the age 25.

I am now 37 years old and have worked hard at becoming the woman I am today. On May 31, 2024 I graduated from Goucher College with Honors. I achieved honors by defending my thesis that questioned "Have cultural norms shifted to signify that eighteen is no longer the marker at which an adolescent transitions into adulthood? Science supports that brain maturation within an adolescent is not reached until the age of 25. What does this mean for emerging adults within Maryland's criminal justice system?"

I spend my time giving back by tutoring my peers and training to become a peer recovery specialist. I have all of the hours required for certification and am just waiting to take the test. I enjoy creating programs that assist in the rehabilitation of the women in my community. I share this with you because I want you to know that I am not the same person I was at the age of 18. I have grown and am working hard to prevent at least one at-risk youth from making the same mistakes that led me to prison by sharing my journey of growth.

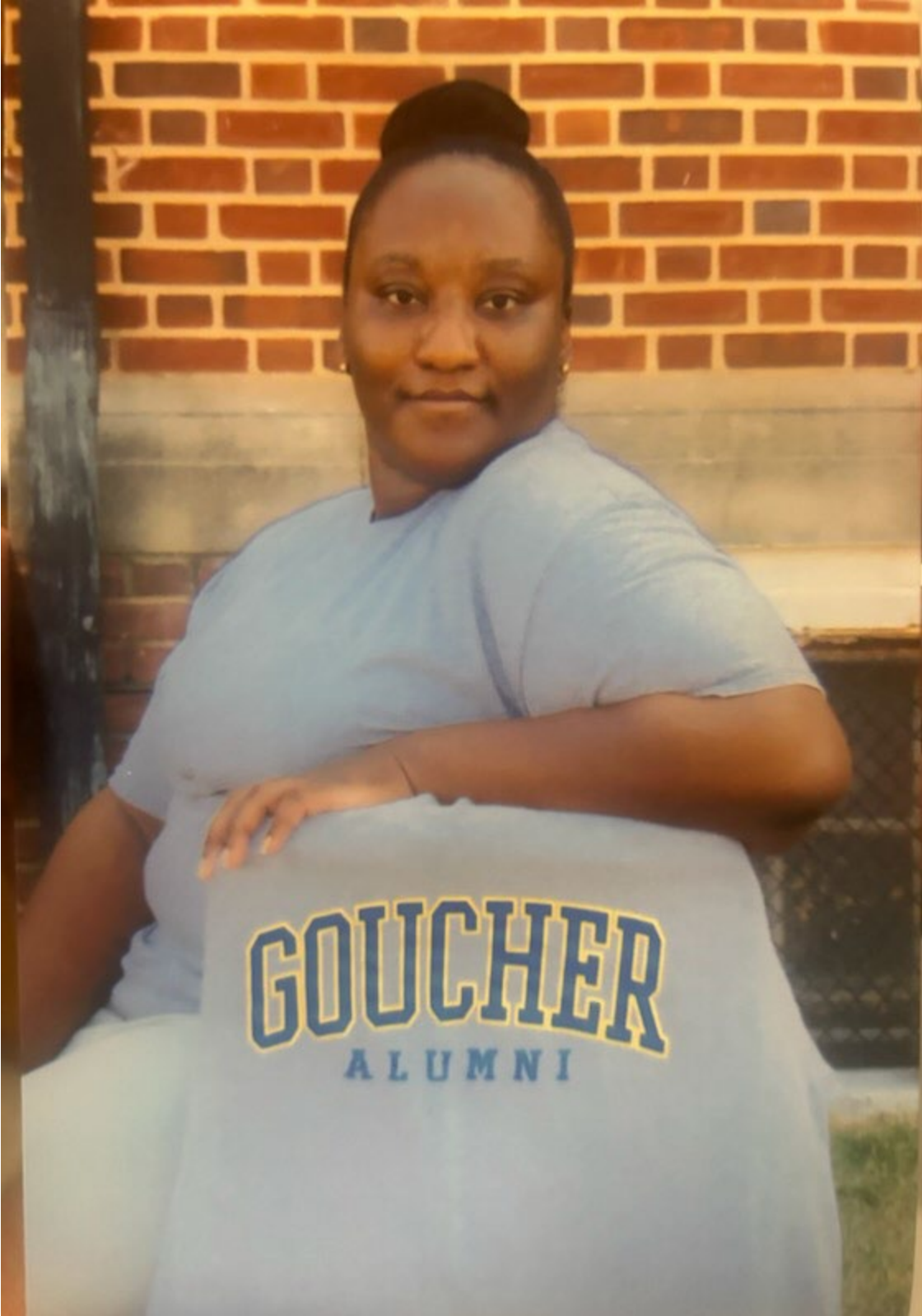
I am an adult who was incarcerated at the age of 18. I believe that I needed to be held accountable for my decisions that led me here. Someone lost their life and that is something I have to live with for the rest of my life. Although I do have parole eligibility, because of my sentences, there is no guaranteed timeline for release. I was given a 10 year hit as a result of my parole hearing in 2020. My next hearing is in 2030. If given a recommendation for release, I would still have to have a risk assessment. The process for a risk assessment has been lengthy. For most people, the process has been three years.

Passing the Second Look at would mean a realistic release date for emerging adults like me. I didn't fit the criteria for the Juvenile Restoration Act of 2021 because I was 18 at the time of my offense. However, the scientific data that renders juveniles less culpable than adults includes emerging adults as being less culpable as well.

I thank you in advance for your time and support of this bill.

Respectfully,

Janet Johnson # 923246
7943 Brockbridge Road
Jessup, Md 20794



My name is LaTronda Jackson

I came to prison by way of very unfortunate events and an Alford Plea. I have taken full responsibility for my part. I relapsed and found myself in fight or flight situation. No other way for me to describe it. I had been clean since 2004 when I gave birth to the third of my six beautiful children. My life went wrong at the age of 5. I felt abandoned, unloved, unwanted and was molested, abused and broken by the same people who said they loved me. Throughout my entire existence I experienced those things, thinking the whole time it was my fault, thinking that I did something to deserve it.

When I got clean, had therapy, counseling and gained the understanding that I was a child and wasn't responsible. I was a victim. It mess me up. I needed help not drugs. I knew better so I begin to do and wanted better. I not only wanted better for myself but also for my children. I begin to be a Mom, productive member of society, husband (Islamic marriage) a roof over our heads and living drug free. I had just had my youngest daughter she was 3 months plus when, I found out my husband was cheating on me and selling drugs. He had 7 children plus my six that I cared for most of the time. They all went to family member's homes for visits and it should have been just me and him. It wind up only being me. I was devastated, possibly suffering from PTSD and I broke down turned to that pain reliever instead of using the coping skills and my NA sponsor. It was biggest mistake of my life. 2 hours. I went through the neighbor, meet with the guy. I had money. In the end he wanted what I wasn't willing to give. He decided he wanted to take it. Here I sit with 35 years in prison for defending myself. I thank good every day for saving my life. It could have been me and I might not have made it back from that relapse.

During my time in MCIW I have remained infraction free. I stayed available as much as I can for my children participating in classes, Family and Children's days. I continue to take group and classes that will allow me to be a better stronger person than I was when I got here. I have maintained a job my whole duration. I have an abundance of certificates and certifications and am aiming for more. When I am release I will prove to the world I am deserving of the freedom rewarded. I miss my children most of all. Changing the cycle.

To Whom It May Concern,

Before my incarceration I was so lost, checked out, unaware, misguided, suffering and suffering from so much abuse mentally, physically, sexually, and emotionally. Not knowing who I was from day to day. I was smothering myself with drugs and alcohol just to be numb. I didn't want to bare the pain and heartbreak I felt constantly from being unwanted, unloved, and abandoned. I was in and out of Foster homes and mental institutions. I have been incarcerated since January 23rd, 2009. I was 19 yrs. Old. I am now 35. Since being behind these walls I have learned and accomplished so much. I have achieved my diploma and 40 certificated from multiple self-help group and classes. I am a mentor for The Youth Challenge Program. I have a job working for Maryland Correctional Enterprise being the line leader of my department. I have overcome everything I was suffering from before my incarceration. I thrive each and every day to put my best foot forward. I am full of humility. I have self-discipline, self-love, self-respect, ambition, integrity, dignity and a heart is so much better. I also have graduated from a 6 month program called ATP(Addiction Treatment Protocol). I attend regular meetings Of Al-Anon, AA. I even buff the floors within the institution. If this bill was to pass, it would mean to me that I have another chance to live my life the proper way and utilize the excellent tools I have obtained. I will be a wise and virtuous human being, giving back to the community, showing that I am worthy of living in society among everyone else. I can show my greatness. I would like to help guide the youth and help them to not make the same mistakes I have. This bill would affect my life because I now know my purpose. I am a leader, a teacher, and a role model. So many are lost, we all live and learn and if I could help save someone's life before heading to that dead end. Then that just what I would do. I want to be to society and my community what I didn't have. I know who I am and I know life will show up but there is a different me now. I know how to look hardship in the face and not run. There is nothing that will stop me from living out my purpose. Please allow me the second chance and an opportunity to show you everything I have written in the lines above. Thank you.

Respectfully Submitted, :

Josiah (Brittany) Barkley #924902

J Barkley

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My name is Cynthia Levening
I am 62 years of age. I have
been incarcerated for 34 years.
There has not been one day
or one minute to pass in those
almost 35 years that my heart does
not ache because of my actions or
the lack of them. all of my life
is full of remorse and regret.
I was sentenced to life plus 75 years
without parole. I only knew my co-defendant
for 30 days. I accepted a ride with a
stranger; he took me to a room in
a house in which I was held against
my will, I was sexually assaulted and
forced to smoke PCP repeatedly over
a course of days. a drug I
never liked or used to even
self medicate which I did most of my
life. I do believe I was at the lowest
point of my pitiful life. I had no
desire to live. This would explain
to me why I did not run away
once I gained my co-defendants
trust. and he untied me. In the

beginning I was tied up on that room on the mattress on the floor. I do recall a very big dog in the room as well. I do not have much memory of the events thereafter; not only was I forced to smoke PCP I also self medicated with my prescribed medications Valium and Placidyls which I did abuse; but were prescribed by DR RUBIN.

I cannot fathom the person I am today committing such a heinous and senseless act as the one I am charged with. It has been hard to live with myself, not to mention forgiving myself. So that I may also be forgiven by God. My heart will never not hurt, and the remorse will forever consume me. I am 62 years old now. I do not know how many years I may have left of life but I wish with all my heart & soul I too, like many of the 'people' I have met here many years ago with like charges who are now home

There is an extreme disparity in sentencing depending upon where you go to trial and its jurisdiction in which that trial took place. I was offered a plea of life w/ Parole if I plead guilty but I did not accept; I regret that today. I was given life w/o Parole plus 75 years.

I do not know the criteria that is used to determine who gets a second chance and who does not. But I have known many who have. They are all doing great for which I am pleased and proud of them.

My first 20 years I tried to accomplish what I could to better myself. I received my GED in 1996. I worked for MCE for about 20 years in various shops. With all my experience + training in the 20 years I worked for MCE, I never received a work related infraction. I have developed transferable skills with the 4 different shops in

which I worked. I earned
many certificates to include master
Bee Keeping which I loved. I also
worked and kept the gardens up
for my first years here.

But after 17
years I became hopeless feeling
and very depressed. I had no
sense of hope or incentive and
the quiet I felt for all the
lives my actions I affected
consumed me. Today I am working
through the quiet by having
a relationship with the Lord,
reading his word and much prayer
I know he has forgiven me
I only hope I pray that
humon kind will also forgive me.
So that I may live my
remaining years free and
trying to give back with
Love and compassion where
it is needed. God has put
many good people in my life
who have been true blessings

for which I am forever grateful.
I have been married now
since 1999 and have a loving
husband & family. I pray you
may find it in your heart
to also forgive me and
consider a second chance
in whatever life I may have
left to live.

Respectfully,

Cynthia Leveing

I attend Lutheran St Dymas
service and have been for the
last 25 years. I wish to go to
the Marian House a structured transitional
housing program where I would receive
intensive & holistic support during
my return to society. The Marian House
is in Baeto, Md & provides comprehensive
programming for formerly incarcerated women.
I also have the support of my
husband of 25 years, Daniel Freeman