

**TESTIMONY ON HB853
MARYLAND SECOND LOOK ACT**

**House Judiciary Committee
February 18, 2025**

SUPPORT

Submitted by: Katherine Thomas

Chair Clippinger, Vice Chair Bartlett and members of the Judiciary Committee:

I, Katherine Thomas am testifying in support of HB853, the Maryland Second Look Act. I am submitting this testimony as a concerned community member in District 5 of the Second Look Coalition.

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.

I spend hours volunteering every week working to build the humanity back into our community. Especially, as white people, we have the responsibility to fight systemic racism. Our prisons rob communities of color and low-income communities of their fathers, husbands, and neighbors. Enough is enough. Will you work with me to reclaim our collective humanity?

This bill also has serious racial justice implications, given that of the 2,212 people serving life sentences in MD, 80% are Black¹, a huge disparity when compared to the only 31% of Black Marylanders in the general population². Shamefully, Maryland also leads the nation in sentencing young Black men to the longest prison terms.

Incarceration is expensive. Let's save costs and allow men and women serving decades-long sentences who have worked hard, reenter society and succeed in their communities.

For these reasons, I encourage you to vote **favorably** on the **Maryland Second Look Act HB853.**

Thank you.

Katherine May Thomas
Laurel, MD

¹ [MD DPSCS FY 2022 Q4 Inmate Characteristics Statistics](#) (2022)

² [United States Census Data](#) (2021).