

Shabree McDonald

Wife of Diontre Stanton

Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 162

January 23, 2026

Judicial Proceedings Committee

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

I write to express my strong SUPPORT for Senate Bill 162. Although I am not a Maryland resident, I submit this testimony as the wife of Diontre Stanton, who was a juvenile at the time of his arrest and conviction. I have witnessed firsthand how deeply childhood sentencing decisions impact not only the individual, but entire families and communities.

SB 162 is a common-sense fix that restores fairness to Maryland's sentencing laws. Under current law, young adults under 25 can seek sentence review after 20 years, while children under 18 — who courts recognize as even more capable of growth and rehabilitation — are excluded based solely on sentencing dates. This contradiction denies children a meaningful opportunity to demonstrate change.

No child should be permanently defined by the worst moment of their youth. This bill does not guarantee release — it restores judicial discretion and ensures children have access to review based on growth, accountability, and rehabilitation.

I respectfully urge the Committee to favorably report Senate Bill 162.

Thank you for your consideration,

Shabree McDonald