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Testimony from:

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In SUPPORT of HB 759, “Criminal Procedure – Motion to Reduce Duration of Sentence – Repeal of Sentencing Date Limitation”

February 17, 2026

House Judiciary Committee

Chairwoman Bartlett and members of the committee,

My name is Logan Seacrest, and I am a fellow in the Criminal Justice and Civil Liberties program at the R Street Institute, a nonprofit, nonpartisan public policy research organization. Our mission is to engage in policy research and outreach to promote free markets and limited, effective government. This is why the sentencing review provisions in HB 759 are of special interest to us.

We believe HB 759 is a necessary technical fix to ensure fundamental fairness and consistency in Maryland’s sentencing laws.

At present, Maryland statute creates an arbitrary distinction in eligibility for judicial review. While the law allows certain individuals between the ages of 18 and 24 at the time of their offense to petition for a sentence reduction, it excludes those who were under the age of 18 if they were sentenced after October 1, 2021.<sup>1</sup> This has created an inconsistency in the law, where young adults are afforded an opportunity for review that is denied to juveniles, despite the latter being less culpable under the law.<sup>2</sup>

For example, if a 15-year-old and a 24-year-old were arrested as co-defendants today, the 24-year-old would eventually be eligible for sentence review, while the 15-year-old would not. This discrepancy is not only constitutionally questionable, it represents a departure from the latest developmental science, indicating that higher levels neuroplasticity make rehabilitation more effective in young children than in

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<sup>1</sup> Md. Code Ann., Crim. Proc. § 8-110 (West 2021).

<sup>2</sup> *Roper v. Simmons*, Supreme Court of the United States, March 1, 2005, p. 569; *Miller v. Alabama*, Supreme Court of the United States, June 25, 2012, p. 471.



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adults.<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, continuing to incarcerate individuals who have demonstrated decades of rehabilitation when they no longer pose a threat to public safety is an inefficient use of state resources.

A limited, effective government should ensure that its mechanism for reviewing sentences is applied logically and equitably, rather than based on an arbitrary date. HB 759 resolves this oversight by removing the date restriction, ensuring that a meaningful opportunity for review is available to all individuals who were under 18 at the time of their offense.

We respectfully ask the committee to issue a favorable report on House Bill 759.

Thank you for your time,

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<sup>3</sup> Lisa L. Weyandt et al., "Neuroplasticity in Children and Adolescents in Response to Treatment Intervention: A Systematic Review of the Literature," *Clinical and Translational Neuroscience* 4:2 (July 2020), p. 21.  
<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/2514183X20974231>.