



**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 759 BEFORE THE MARYLAND HOUSE
JUDICIARY COMMITTEE**

February 17, 2026

Dear Chairwoman Bartlett and Members of the Maryland House Judiciary Committee:

Human Rights for Kids respectfully submits this testimony for the official record to express our support for HB 409. We are grateful to Delegate Stinnett for his leadership in introducing this bill and appreciate the Maryland Legislature's willingness to address these important human rights issues concerning Maryland's children.

House Bill 759 is a logical, technical fix that ensures all children receive the benefit of the Juvenile Restoration Act's sentencing review provision. Studies have repeatedly shown that children's brains are not fully developed. This means that they are frequently impulsive and immature in their decision making as teenagers, but also have great potential for growth and change over time. The Juvenile Restoration Act provides judges with the opportunity to review a child's sentence after they have served 20 years in prison. This opportunity should not be limited based on an arbitrary sentencing date, but should be available to **all** of Maryland's children.

Currently in Maryland, due to the 2025 Second Look Act, there are individuals who were ages 18 to 24 at the time of their offenses receiving judicial review via the expanded Juvenile Restoration Act, but their child codefendants under 18 are not. An awareness of this inequity creates a moral imperative for the General Assembly to act. Nelson Mandela said, "There can be no keener revelation of a society's soul than the way in which it treats its children." The urgency with which Maryland passes this simple technical fix contained in HB 759 reveals how the state treats its children, especially children of color and children who have experienced trauma. I encourage the Committee to issue a **favorable report on House Bill 759**.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Submitted by:
James Dold
Chief Executive Officer & Founder
Human Rights for Kids