



February 17, 2026

TO: Members of the House Judiciary Committee

RE: House Bill 759

Position: Favorable

Dear Chairwoman Bartlett, Vice Chair Davis and Members of the Judiciary Committee:

On behalf of Helping Ourselves to Transform (HOTT), I write in strong support of House Bill 759.

HB759 corrects a clear and unjust disparity created by prior reforms. The 2021 Juvenile Restoration Act provided a pathway for judicial review for children under 18—but limited that relief to those sentenced before October 1, 2021. The Maryland Second Look Act later expanded review eligibility to certain individuals ages 18 to 24, unintentionally creating a troubling inconsistency: under current law, a 24-year-old may be eligible for review after 20 years, while a child sentenced at age 15 after October 1, 2021 is denied that same opportunity.

Children are constitutionally and developmentally different from adults. Science, law, and public policy recognize that youth have a greater capacity for growth, change, and rehabilitation. HB759 restores fairness by ensuring that all children under 18, regardless of sentencing date, have equal access to judicial review.

This bill does not guarantee release. It guarantees review. It allows courts to consider maturity, rehabilitation, and transformation. It strengthens public safety by recognizing that accountability and redemption can coexist.

Justice should not depend on an arbitrary date. For these reasons, Helping Ourselves to Transform respectfully urges a favorable report on House Bill 759.

Sincerely,

Dr. Carmen R. Johnson/s/ Executive Director
Helping Ourselves to Transform (HOTT)