



The **CAMPAIGN** for the  
**FAIR SENTENCING**  
of **YOUTH**

Bill: House Bill 759  
Title: Criminal Procedure – Motion to Reduce Duration of Sentence – Repeal of Sentencing Date Limitation  
Date: February 17, 2026  
Position: SUPPORT  
Committee: Judiciary Committee  
CONTACT: Crystal Carpenter, Campaign for the Fair Sentencing of Youth

Chair Bartlett, Vice-Chair Davis, and members of the Judiciary Committee:

My name is Crystal Carpenter. I serve as Chief Operating Officer (COO) of the Campaign for the Fair Sentencing of Youth (CFSY) and have the honor of leading its **National Family Network** (NFN). I respectfully submit this testimony in **support** of House Bill 759. I thank Delegate Stinnett for introducing this legislation and appreciate the General Assembly's continued commitment to fair and constitutional youth sentencing.

The CFSY is a national coalition working to end extreme youth sentencing and advance age-appropriate, constitutional approaches to accountability, healing, and public safety.

The NFN is a collective of family members and loved ones impacted by youth violence. This includes individuals who have lost loved ones to youth violence, as well as families of people serving lengthy adult sentences for acts committed as children. The Network promotes healing and restorative practices and works to end extreme sentences for youth, including life without the possibility of parole.

CFSY proudly supported the 2021 passage of the Juvenile Restoration Act, which created a meaningful opportunity for sentence review after 20 years for individuals who were under 18 at the time of their offense. However, the current sentencing date limitation leaves some children unfairly excluded from that opportunity.

HB 759 is a common-sense, straightforward technical fix that removes this arbitrary restriction and ensures that all children under 18—regardless of when they were sentenced—have access to the same opportunity for review. This change promotes fairness, aligns with constitutional principles recognizing that children are different from adults for sentencing purposes, and reduces unnecessary legal risk for the state.

A matter of hours, days, or calendar timing should not determine who has access to reconsideration. Justice should not hinge on the happenstance of when a sentence was imposed. When eligibility turns on a procedural date rather than the core principle that youth matters and that young people can change, the law drifts away from its purpose.

Most importantly, HB 759 restores hope—hope for families waiting for their loved ones to be seen as more than their worst mistake, and hope for young people inside who are working every day to grow and change. That hope should not depend on an arbitrary date in the statute.

For these reasons, I urge the Committee to issue a favorable report on HB 759. Thank you for your consideration.

Crystal Carpenter  
Chief Operating Officer  
Campaign for the Fair Sentencing of Youth



## RBIJ Statement in Support of HB759 / SB162

The Responsible Business Initiative for Justice (RBIJ) is an award-winning international nonprofit that works with companies to champion solutions that promote public safety, deliver justice, and strengthen communities. RBIJ has partnered with hundreds of businesses in over two dozen states to advocate for common-sense reforms that expand the workforce and stimulate growth.

RBIJ strongly supports HB759/SB162 as a necessary step to reinforce fairness, constitutional consistency, and equal treatment in Maryland’s sentencing review framework. Business leaders across the United States increasingly understand that racial inequities in the justice system carry lasting consequences for families, community stability, workforce participation, and long-term economic growth.

HB759/SB162 addresses a clear imbalance in the current sentencing review process by ensuring that individuals who were under 18 at the time of their offense are afforded the same opportunity for review that is currently available to certain individuals who were ages 18 to 24. Providing access to meaningful review for youth is consistent with constitutional principles and longstanding recognition that children are different for purposes of sentencing. The bill preserves judicial discretion, maintains accountability, and keeps public safety paramount, while ensuring the law functions in a fair and even-handed manner.

A justice system that operates equitably strengthens communities, expands economic opportunity, and reinforces public confidence — all of which are essential to a stable and competitive business climate. RBIJ supports HB759/SB162 because advancing fairness and consistency in sentencing review is not only sound policy, it is vital to Maryland’s families, communities, and long-term economic future.

Nicole Banister  
Director, Policy and Advocacy  
Responsible Business Initiative for Justice