

TO:

Delegate J. Sandy Bartlett, Chair

Delegate Debra Davis, Vice Chair

Members of the *House Judiciary Committee*

FROM:

Anthony Wazir Muhammad

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RE: HOUSE BILL 759

*Criminal Procedure – Motion to Reduce Duration of Sentence –
Repeal of Sentencing Date Limitation*

POSITION: **SUPPORT**

February 13, 2026

Greetings,

I respectfully submit this written testimony for the official record to express my **SUPPORT** for *House Bill 759*.

I am a returning citizen. At the age of 15, I was arrested for two homicide charges in Baltimore City. I was ultimately convicted and sentenced to life plus a consecutive 20-years in prison.

The judge who sentenced me *mistakenly* believed that I was unredeemable, unreformable, and that the actions I committed were unreconcilable. Despite having no prior adult conviction, the judge said it was a shame that someone so young could go so far wrong at such an early age in life. She stated that I had “*little prospect of ever being able to come out and function,*” and that I showed very “*little hope of rehabilitation.*” The judge was unconvinced that “*job training, education, and such would make [me] a safe citizen,*” and in her most condemning remarks stated her belief that if I was ever given the opportunity to commit the crimes again “*it would happen.*”

Thankfully, the judge who sentenced me was all wrong about me. Egregious as my crimes were, they were not the result of “*permanent incorrigibility,*” “*irreparable corruption,*” or “*exhibit such irretrievable depravity that rehabilitation is impossible,*” as articulated in several cases by the U.S. Supreme Court.

Today, I respectfully submit to this committee that not only am I redeemed, reformed, and rehabilitated, but I have also reconciled with the family of my victims who have granted me their forgiveness after successfully completing victim/offender mediation.

I served a total of 29-YEARS, 7-MONTHS, & 29-DAYS before I was released under the *Maryland Juvenile Restoration Act* on September 20, 2022. There are no words adequate enough to express the depths of my remorse for the crimes I committed. I made a horrible decision! It was the worst decision I ever made in my life; a painful decision that I deeply regret every single day of my life.

I will ALWAYS accept responsibility for my actions and continue to express my sincere and deep remorse. Additionally, as famous civil rights attorney, author of the book *Just Mercy*, and founder of the *Equal Justice Initiative*, Brian Stevenson, once said: ***“Each of us is more than the worst thing we have ever done.”***

To prove this point, the judge who released me under the JRA said the exact opposite about me than the judge who originally sentenced me. In fact, the judge who released me said that in all of her years on the bench, I was the first violent offender that she has absolutely no reservations about releasing back into the community.

I am very pleased to inform this committee that I am one of many JRA releases who have successfully reintegrated back into society, and who collectively share a less than 4% recidivism rate. Many JRA releases are doing phenomenal work in the community all throughout the State of Maryland as productive citizens. Since my release, I have been employed by the *Maryland Parole Partnership* at the *ACLU of Maryland*, as a Community Engagement Specialist with *We Our Us*, and as a Youth Mentor with *Baltimore Brothers, Inc.*, helping other youth make better decisions.

HB 759 is a straightforward bill that ensures fundamental fairness. It is a common-sense technical fix to ensure that disparities doesn't exist and a meaningful opportunity for a sentence review hearing (not a guarantee of release) is available AFTER 20-YEARS to all children who are convicted and sentenced as adults in Maryland.

For these reasons, I urge a favorable report on House Bill 759
Thank you for your time and consideration of this legislation.