



**TESTIMONY FOR SB0494**  
**JUVENILES CONVICTED AS ADULTS – SENTENCING – LIMITATIONS AND**  
**REDUCTION (JUVENILE RESTORATION ACT)**

**Bill Sponsor:** Senator West

**Committee:** Judicial Proceedings

**Organization Submitting:** Maryland Legislative Coalition

**Person Submitting:** Cecilia Plante, co-chair

**Position:** FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony in favor of SB0494 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. The Maryland Legislative Coalition is an association of activists - individuals and grassroots groups in every district in the state. We are unpaid citizen lobbyists, and our Coalition supports well over 30,000 members.

Our members believe in second chances, especially for those who committed crimes as minors and have received life sentences, or sentences that will essentially keep them behind bars for most of their lives. We also believe that the punishment should fit the crime, and that there are crimes that deserve a long sentence.

These two conflicting ideas are handled in this bill. For those juveniles who are newly sentenced, it allows for leniency by allowing judges to hand out sentences that are below the required minimum and it specifically prohibits life sentences. This still allows for a range of sentences that would be appropriate to the crime, but also allows the judge to lean towards leniency when necessary.

For those who have been incarcerated with sentences of 20 years or more, it allows the incarcerated person to file a motion to reduce their sentence. It also allows for that motion to be denied. We feel that this strikes a good balance between the desires of the victims related to the severity of the crime, and the idea that somewhere along the way, the convicted person can rehabilitate themselves.

We support this bill and recommend a **FAVORABLE** report in committee.