

Bill number SB494

Jessica Fisher, 6150 Shadywood Road, Elkridge MD 21075

March 26, 2021

Dear Mr. Chairman and fellow Judiciary Committee members,

My name is Jessica Fisher and I currently reside in Howard County, MD. I am strongly opposed to SB494.

Shirley Rue Mullinix is my grandmother. She played in the Columbia Orchestra in Howard County and hiked the Appalachian trails. Her last job was as a home and hospital teacher. She is my grandmother who did art projects with me, painted me pictures and loved me unconditionally.

My grandmother was removed from this world in such a horrendous way. I've always wondered why it happened and why I could not have my grandmother in my life. I may never know why but I do know how.

She was murdered by a teenager on March 25, 1992 who was charged, convicted, and sentenced as an adult in 1993. Her murderer was one of my grandmother's student's; the last stop she made was to his apartment to complete his lesson. He punched her in the face, raped her, and strangled her. He left her body behind a convenience store, twitching and still slightly breathing. He dumped her personal items into a dumpster near his apartment. He convened with his friends at a basketball court, played a game of basketball, and then ate McDonalds.

This is the murderer that you would be allowing to walk the streets near your mother, father, children, spouse, partner, grandparents, and friends. This is the rapist that you would be allowing near your loved ones.

You may consider his mitigating factors: the research about adolescent brain development, his age and maturity at the time of my grandmothers murder, his supposed growth and maturity since he has been incarcerated, assuming he now has capacity for and has made efforts toward rehabilitation, and his evidence that he presents that he has accepted accountability for his rape and murder of my grandmother.

What you should consider is his history as a rapist. He raped a girl in the bathroom of his school before he raped my grandmother. You should consider his history of violence. He has a history of assaults towards his own mother. He has an inability to accept his actions and be held accountable due to the fact that he sat across from me in 2010 and said that "sexual activity" took place but never could call it what it was: rape. He was given many opportunities before he murdered my grandmother to change, to get on the right path, to correct his thinking and modify his behaviors. One of those supports was in fact my grandmother being in his home to help him with school. He did not take advantage of those opportunities. Instead he took advantage of my grandmother, Shirley, and he intimidated and scared

her. He then took advantage of her and raped her. He then strangled her and dumped her body beside a wooded area hoping no one would find her.

I think that it is important that you not just view these offenders as juveniles who need a chance at life. They have taken lives. My offender continues to take mine. I do not want to have to prepare for hearings; constantly thinking about how she was brutally raped, strangled, dumped and left for dead. There have been many hearings, trials, and appeals where investigations were completed, the evidence has been investigated, and he has presented his case numerous times in front of judges and his peers. He was found guilty. They took into account his childhood, his upbringing, his circumstances, and still found him guilty and his sentence has been upheld many times. A rapist and murderer does not deserve to be released if they have already been given a fair and just trial in which they were found guilty by the citizens of this State, had judicial consideration at sentencing, and had thorough appeal hearings to reconsider the verdict and sentence. Honest and fair judges have already decided their sentence and this should be upheld. Enough is enough.

I am left with the pain that I have felt throughout all of these years. I am remembering what he told me when I sat in front of him. She suffered for much longer than I knew. I am forced to remember that she was raped seeing his face. I have to remember that she pleaded for her life. I am forced to remember that her last words may have been "I won't tell" and the only way I know that is because her rapist and murderer told me so. He will harm someone else. He will rape someone again. He will go on haunting me in my nightmares as I continue to fear for my life and the life of my loved ones.

I hear a lot about another chance. Another chance for who? My grandmother doesn't get another chance. My family doesn't get another chance. I don't get another chance at having my grandmother in my life. I can't remember her laugh or smell or touch. She's dead. Raped, strangled, dead.

Please do not make me relive the horror, pain, anger, stress, and anxiety that this case causes me to experience by going to the courthouse for up to three hearings. Do not forget that there are victims' families, friends, strangers, that love and care for the victims whose lives were taken. We are re-victimized when hearings, sentencing reviews, changes in any conditions occur. Allow the sentences to remain what they are. Do not put me through the agonizing pain and hurt of my grandmother's murder because our murderer happened to be 16 at the time of the crime.

I want you to know the name Shirley Rue Mullinix and remember her story. She was a lovely woman who held my family together. She loved her students and helped many young people succeed. She played the violin and gave to others even through her music. She painted and made beautiful pieces of art.

I want to solely remember her, remember Shirley Rue Mullinix. Please let my grandmother truly Rest In Peace, knowing that her family does not have to relive her death again and again.

If there is to be justice, please consider my testimony and do not pass SB494.