

**TESTIMONY ON SB 0771
MARYLAND SECOND LOOK ACT**

**Senate Judiciary Proceedings Committee
March 15, 2023**

SUPPORT

Submitted by: Magdalena Tsiongas

Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher and members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee:

I, Magdalena Tsiongas, am testifying in support of SB 0771, the Maryland Second Look Act. I am submitting this testimony as an impacted family member of an incarcerated person.

Passage of the Maryland Second Look Act would create a meaningful opportunity for sentence modification for incarcerated people after having served 20 years of their sentence. I firmly believe that those individuals who are able to demonstrate their growth and rehabilitation, such that they are no longer a threat to public safety, should have the opportunity for release.

Given that he is unable to testify himself, my loved one had a few words to share:

“After being sentenced to life without parole at 19 years old, during my past 16 years of incarceration, I had to choose to intentionally seek out opportunities for betterment, often in the face of hopelessness. I have come to support those around me in their own journeys by leading the Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous groups for other incarcerated men. Religion has also been an important part of my healing, and I have dedicated myself as an usher in church. I have finally had the opportunity to take college classes and focus on writing, which has been a passion of mine since a child. I do all of this because I know there is much more for me to give to my community. The Maryland Second Look Act would allow me to demonstrate my growth to the Court, far beyond the 19 year old that first came to prison. Being able to one day come home would allow me to repay my family for all they have sacrificed for me these almost two decades and continue my growth in society.”

As a family member, the Maryland Second Look Act is a meaningful opportunity for relief, and one day release, for our loved ones. We have watched the growth in our loved ones over years and decades and know how much loving support they have behind them when they come home. This bill is a vital tool in making meaningful opportunities for release happen, as currently, incarcerated people in MD can only petition the Court for modification within 90 days of sentencing¹, meaning many people are denied modification before they have the opportunity to show their growth.

In 2021, the General Assembly made a positive step by passing the Juvenile Restoration Act [SB0494/HB0409](#) which allowed individuals who were minors sentenced as adults the ability to

petition the Court for sentence modification after 20 years. The Maryland Second Look Act would extend this ability to people like my loved one, who were incarcerated as young adults.

For these reasons, I encourage you to vote **favorably** on the **Maryland Second Look Act SB0771**.

Thank you for your work and thoughtful consideration of our comments.

¹Maryland Rule 4-345