

April 3, 2025

Dear Chair Craven and Members of the House Judiciary Committee,

I am a Providence resident writing in support of House Bill No. [5362](#), the Sentencing Reconsideration Act, which would establish a fair process for reevaluating prison sentences after ten years based on demonstrated rehabilitation, legal changes, or other compelling factors.

I am a community organizer with loved ones in the prison system and close relationships with people who came home after decades incarcerated. I am intimately familiar with the truth that human beings are capable of horrific acts—but that **we are also capable of growth and change**. If our prison system is to be rehabilitative, we must acknowledge and honor that possibility of growth. This bill does not automatically release individuals, but simply requires that the state grant an opportunity for incarcerated people to work towards reintegration into their communities.

Data widely substantiates that incarceration has traumatic impacts ranging from substance use relapse and PTSD to the loss of parents and financial stability in homes; that lengthy prison sentences provide only a modest deterrent effect to harmful behaviors; and that the costs of life sentences far outweigh its hoped-for benefits. It is hard to grow as a person when society has already deemed you irreparably harmful, and even disposable. This bill would offer incarcerated people hope—a lifeline and motivation for growth, even in the harsh conditions of a prison cell.

This bill is also a necessary step in redressing decades of mass incarceration and the racial injustice historically embedded in our policing and court systems. Black and brown people are over-represented in the prison population, and especially among those serving lengthy prison sentences. For incarcerated persons serving extreme prison sentences—specifically life without the possibility of parole—Black people are approximately 20% and Hispanic/Latino 28% of that population.

H5362 can by no means heal the devastating effects of extreme sentencing—from generational trauma to a widening wealth gap—particularly on Black and brown communities. However, it is a crucial step in restoring our people (now aunts, uncles, grandparents, and elders) to their families and communities.

Sincerely,
Anusha Alles