

To: The Honorable Kara Hope
Cc: Criminal Justice Committee Members
Re: Second Look Legislation
From: Derrick Jackson, Certified Law Enforcement Officer

March 19, 2024

Dear Chair Hope and Members of the Criminal Justice Committee,

My name is Derrick Jackson and I write to you today in support of the work being done around Second Look legislation (HB 4556-HB 4560).

I grew up here in Michigan, in a hyper-violent neighborhood where I witnessed the devastating impact of violence in my community, experiencing the loss of loved ones and friends to senseless acts. So much loss that I remember attending more funerals than I can remember graduation parties. I grew up to become a police officer and for the past 15 years I have served as a Director at the Washtenaw County Sheriff's Office and have dedicated my life to keeping our community safe.

I do not come to you today advocating for a blanket release of all individuals or promoting an extreme ideology. Second Look legislation is not about indiscriminately freeing individuals, and I would not be advocating for it if it were. I stand before you as a law enforcement officer who understands the deep scars that violence leaves on individuals, especially our youth. I believe in the power of Second Look to enhance safety and prevent future victimization for two reasons, justice reinvestment and community-based violence intervention.

Justice Reinvestment is a concept that emphasizes reallocating resources from punitive measures like incarceration to preventive strategies based on data-driven approaches. The potential savings from implementing Second Look could be transformative if reinvested back into communities like mine.

At the Washtenaw County Sheriff's Office, we have seen the positive impact of hiring individuals who have been incarcerated. We don't hire them to be informants or to sweep our floors. We value their expertise and insight into the community, recognizing the untapped brilliance they bring to the table. I think of individuals like the 17-year-old who pulled the trigger, served time for a crime but now works to save lives in our neighborhoods. If we had invested in their potential earlier, perhaps we could have prevented the tragedy that led to their incarceration. By continuing to rely solely on

punitive measures, we perpetuate a cycle that fails to address the root causes of violent crime.

I also speak to you as someone deeply involved in community-based violence intervention efforts, where those with firsthand experience are best equipped to find solutions. Former perpetrators of violence can become powerful agents of change in preventing future harm. Their lived experiences are both a source of strength and vulnerability, but when channeled positively, they can make a significant impact in our communities.

I urge you to consider shifting away from ineffective downstream policies towards proven upstream investments. Let us empower those who have transformed their lives to be part of the solution in rebuilding and safeguarding our streets.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Derrick Jackson