

SECOND LOOK NEWSLETTER



#Strive2wardFreedom

Issue 001

April, 2025

What is Second-Look Legislation?

Second-look legislation allows courts to review and potentially reduce long prison sentences (25 years or more) after a person has served a significant portion (10-20 years) of their time. It recognizes that people can change and seeks to correct overly harsh sentences, especially for those sentenced when young or under outdated laws. These laws provide a chance for rehabilitation to be considered, offering hope for release to individuals who have demonstrated growth, remorse, and a commitment to positive change.

Join the Initiative

Are you willing to be part of a network of incarcerated men and women working to push for second-look legislation? This effort will focus on educating others, engaging in dialogue with decision-makers, and organizing collective action. If you're interested, write a letter stating your willingness to join or have a loved one email us. Share your ideas, questions, and concerns. We aim to gather letters, build awareness, and create opportunities for sentence reviews. Let us know how you'd like to be involved!



Why SC Needs a Second Look

South Carolina needs second-look legislation because its sentencing laws have led to excessively long prison terms, often without considering personal growth or rehabilitation. Around 3,300 people in SCDC are serving sentences over 25 years, many of whom were young at the time of their crimes, sentenced under outdated policies, or lacked adequate legal representation. Second-look legislation would provide a fair opportunity to review cases, ensuring justice evolves with rehabilitation and public safety in mind.

Strategy to create avenues to freedom

- Build a network of incarcerated men and women to lead this initiative from within.
- Educate the prison population and their support systems on how to get involved in the legislative process.
- Create dialogue between incarcerated individuals and those with the power to push for change.
- Collect letters from those who could benefit from second-look legislation and send them to senators, prosecutors, and judges.



John Doe
#B3946006-BR549

Second Look Sentencing EXPLAINED

What it is, why we need it, and how it works

What it is:

Second look sentencing laws grant an individual serving an extreme sentence the opportunity to have their sentence reviewed and potentially be released if the person has successfully rehabilitated themselves after a defined period (e.g., 10 or 15 years). A judge or a sentencing review board (parole board, indeterminate sentence board, etc.) may reduce a sentence or release an individual.

How it works:

Step 1: A judge sentences John Doe to 35 years in prison.



Step 2: John successfully completes rehabilitative programming in prison and has few disciplinary infractions.



Step 3: After 10 years of incarceration, John becomes eligible to have his sentence reviewed. This can be done through a petition to the court or eligibility to appear before a parole board or discretionary release panel.



Why do we need it?

1.5 million

people incarcerated in state and federal prison.

53,290

people serving life without parole sentences.

1 in 7

people in prison are serving a life sentence or a "virtual" life sentence of 50 years or more.

17 states

plus the federal government have no parole system in place.

Step 4: The court or review board considers changes in John's life, including behavior in prison, participation in programming, maturation, as well as input from stakeholders such as the prosecuting attorney, victims, and prison staff.



Step 5: The court or review board determines whether or not John remains a public safety risk and whether the original sentence advances the interest of justice. John can then have his sentence reduced or be released and sent home immediately, often under supervision.



Step 6: John is released from prison – saving himself, his family, and taxpayers the high economic and social costs of his excessive sentence.

