

# WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE

## 2024 REGULAR SESSION

Introduced

### House Bill 4021

FISCAL  
NOTE

By Delegate Young

[Introduced January 10, 2024; Referred to the  
Committee on the Judiciary]

1 A BILL to amend the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, by adding thereto a new section,  
 2 designated §62-11A-1b, relating to establishing the Second Look Sentencing Act;  
 3 providing a procedure for modification of a prison sentence when a person has served at  
 4 least 10 years of a sentence.

*Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:*

**ARTICLE 11A. RELEASE FOR WORK AND OTHER PURPOSES.**

**§62-11A-1b. Second Look Sentencing Act - Modification of sentencing alternatives.**

1 Notwithstanding any other provision of this code to the contrary:

2 (a) Modification. — Judges may consider and modify a prison sentence that is more than  
 3 10 years if: A person has served at least 10 years of their sentence; and the court finds that: (1)  
 4 The defendant is not a danger to any person or community; or (2) the defendant presents no  
 5 credible risk of criminal conduct; or (3) the defendant demonstrates a readiness for reentry; and (4)  
 6 the interests of justice warrant a sentence modification. Individuals granted a sentence  
 7 modification shall remain under supervised release for no more than five years following their  
 8 release from prison. The court shall state on the record the reasons for granting or denying a  
 9 sentence modification. There is a presumption of release for a defendant who is 50 years or older  
 10 on the date of application for resentencing.

11 (b) Reapplication. — Any person who is denied a sentence modification may reapply after  
 12 the following period: (1) A second application may be made five years after an order was entered  
 13 by the court for the first application. If a defendant appeals the decision of the first application, they  
 14 may not file a second petition. (2) A third application may be made two years after an order was  
 15 entered by the court for the second application. (3) A final application may be made when the  
 16 defendant is 50 years or older and has exhausted the sentencing modification process.

17 (c) Factors Considered. — When determining to modify a sentence, the court may  
 18 consider the factors in subsection (a) of this section, including the nature of the offense, the history  
 19 and characteristics of the defendant. The court shall consider: (1) The age of the defendant at the

20 time of the offense; (2) the age of the defendant at the time of the petition, and relevant data on age  
21 and declining criminality; (3) a report and recommendation of the Commissioner of Corrections,  
22 including information on compliance, and completion of any educational, vocational, or other  
23 programs; (4) a report and recommendation of the prosecuting attorney of the county in which the  
24 defendant was convicted; (5) whether the defendant has demonstrated maturity, rehabilitation,  
25 and fitness to reenter society sufficient to justify a sentence modification; (6) a statement from the  
26 victim or a family member of the victim, if the victim is deceased; (7) a report on the physical,  
27 mental, or psychiatric examination of the defendant; (8) the family and community circumstances  
28 of the defendant at the time of the offense, including history of abuse or involvement in child  
29 welfare system, and the potential benefits to children and family members of reunification with the  
30 defendant; (9) the extent of the role of the defendant in the offense and whether and to what extent  
31 an adult was involved (if the defendant was a juvenile at the time of the offense); (10) the  
32 diminished culpability of juveniles compared to adults; if the defendant was a juvenile at the time of  
33 the offense; and (11) any other information the court finds relevant.

34 (d) *Appeal*. — The state or the defendant may file an appeal for a review of a final order of  
35 either the initial application for a sentence modification or the final application when the defendant  
36 is over 50 years old.

NOTE: The purpose of this bill is to provide a procedure for modification of a prison sentence when a person has served at least 10 years of a sentence.

Strike-throughs indicate language that would be stricken from a heading or the present law, and underscoring indicates new language that would be added.