

Statement of Denise L. Jenkins for HR#3 Hearing

I come to you today with a humble and saddened heart to speak on behalf of not just the ones we lost due to domestic violence, but the ones who still suffer in silence at the hands of their abusers. There has to be something more; something immediate, something lawful that will mandate a partnering of all sides. As a domestic violence advocate, educator and survivor. I have and still serve a countless number of women who gathered up the strength to take action, but still fear for the safety of their children as well as their own lives.

Week after week, month after month I work with victims who have little hope and trust in a system that was designed to protect and serve. They believe that if they do cry out for help they will be judged for a situation that is out of their control. They believe their real screams of pain, fear, frustration, sorrow and abuse will not be heard because it's easier to believe it was their fault. How did we get here; where we victimize the victims? There are holes in our system that only a joint effort can mend.

You, the influencers, trailblazers, lawmakers have an opportunity to make a difference in the lives of so many by bringing change with this HB#3 lovingly known as Aisha's Law. Is it enough? We will see and if not, we will be back to ask for your help yet again. However, we can on this day honor the women (and yes men) who spoke out, stood up and did what was right according to this present system. The ones who got up and filed the TPO's and CPO's, the ones that left their abusers to struggle from pay check to pay check and even the ones who got the divorce and did their best to live a better life; but lost their lives because it was simply not enough.

We need to ensure that their living was not lived in vain. Not today, not anymore. We have to keep making adjustments to this working system and our laws until we get it right; so that my sisters and friends like Tonya Hunter, a marriage and family therapist, Crystal W. Walter a housekeeper and Aisha Fraser a loyal teacher and servant leader lives matter after the grave.

As a survivor of generational abuse... I remember my mother's screams and unfortunately my children remember mine. I was one of the blessed ones who eventually got away and still live to tell the story and now work with a group of wonderful professionals, survivors, volunteers and faith walking individuals who believe in encouraging others that they too can have the same opportunity to survive.

We have a right to live unafraid. We have a right to live our dreams of full productive lives and so do our children. We trust that you will pass this bill into law, so that local organizations like the Beyond Abuse Project are assured a seat at the table to work hand in hand with our peace officers and community partners, so that our professional expertise, life experiences and efforts will not be ignored. *"We make a Choice to use our Voice."* dlj

Grateful to Serve,

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