

Tuesday, December 8<sup>th</sup>, 2020

From:  
Rukiye Z. Abdul-Mutakallim  
6125 Belleair Place  
Cincinnati, OH 45224

To:  
The House Criminal Justice Committee

Testimony in **Support of SB 256**  
**Regards Sentencing Offenders Under 18 When Committed Offense**

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In this world that we are born and die in, are "Innate Laws". These Laws never change, and mankind didn't bring them into existence; nor can mankind exist without them. One of the many "Innate Laws" is, "Babies; Butterflies; Bees" Without them mankind has NO FUTURE!

A very wise saying from a renowned book in history says, "...Are those who know equal with those who know not? But only men of understanding will pay heed" (Qur'aan, Chapter 39:9).

AsSalaam, Greetings and Salutations, Chairman Lang, Vice Chair Plummer, Ranking Member Leland, and other members of our esteemed leaders.

I humbly stand before you, this morning pleading on behalf of those who have not the understanding, were not shown the understanding, nor have they had time to gain the understanding to become "those who pay heed".

This Senate Bill, "SB-256" represents them and so does my story concerning my son, who was "set upon", June 28<sup>th</sup>, 2015 and died June 29<sup>th</sup>, 2015

My name is Rukiye Zathra Abul-Mutakallim. And I am the proud mother of Suliman Ahmed Abdul-Mutakallim. He "is" a Navy Man of the United States of America (I refuse to refer to my son in the past tense. His spirit is still among us). My son, chose to follow in the footsteps of a long line of military men and women in our family's history to service their family, their neighbors, their community and their nation. He chose to service as an "enlisted" Navy Personnel, when he could have been a Navy Officer (his brother is a Commander in the Navy) --"AR". However, he wanted to be among those less favored then himself to show them that even when you have "challenges" in your life, you can and must always be kind, lend a helping hand, be understanding, pray and hope for the best, and use kind words towards each other, even when others don't do the same. He was raised with an Islamic understanding on how you live your life on this earth.

On a Sunday night, June 28<sup>th</sup>, 2015 between the hours of 8-pm & 10-pm, my son walked to an ATM near his home. He got \$60 dollars from the bank machine. He then walked to a near-by Take-Out Restaurant to buy dinner for himself and his family. He was returning from the restaurant, walking under a poorly lit overpass, when he was attacked. The amount of money that they took off his dying body was \$40 dollars. They also took his wallet, his cell phone, and the food he was bringing home for his family to enjoy.

Three assailants walked up behind him, shot him in the nape-of-the-neck. They did not even say, "stick'em-up" or "give me all your money", nor did they face him. They just shot him in the back of his head, he fell into the gutter, then they robbed him"! ---- My son was not born in the gutter, nor was he raised in a gutter like condition, and I thank The Lord of us all, that he did not die in the gutter!

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The assailants were, a 14-year old, a 16-year old and a 25-year old adult that lead the boys to committing such a heinous crime. What made it so heinous in my mind was how they committed this horrible act --- they shot him from the back, and as my son laid there dying, then they robbed him and just walked away. They did not run, nor looked back. And to add to this merciless act, they did not even call 911 knowing that he was still alive, and they had my son's cell phone!

When we (his family) arrived at the hospital, my son was in the ICU. The upper part of his head was completely wrapped all the way around. You could see his face, but the swelling was so bad that his eyes were swollen shut. His coloration was dark from the blood that had built up from the gunshot. Yet he was still alive when we arrived. It was as if he was waiting for us... for me. I came close to him, speaking his name. My tears fell on his blood-soaked wrappings, his shoulders, and his hands. I recited Quranic Prayers while I held his hand.

We called his oldest brother, the Lt Commander (at that time), who was stationed at the Pentagon in VA, and put the phone up to his ear, so Suliman could hear his voice.

As I sat by my baby's side and as his hourglass was trickling down, I felt the need to tell him about his birth. I said, Suliman you were born on a Tuesday, December 15, 1975, at 1:32 pm. You were 8lbs, 5oz, 21 inches long. I carried you for 10 months, because you were not in a hurry to leave the warmth and safety of my womb. My labor with you was 1 hour only and you were born in silence as is the Islamic way. And the first word you heard (pronounced in your right-ear) was The Creator's name Allah, and the next words were (pronounced in your left-ear) your name, Suliman Ahmed Abdul-Mutakallim.

I did not fight back the tears. I allowed them to fall as I kissed his hand and told him how much I loved him. That I was so honored to have him as a son.

As I looked upon his glowing face, I saw a tear run down the corner of his right eye. A single tear. And then his hands began to turn cold. I knew then, at that very moment, my baby boy was gone. His spirit and soul had left his body.

I then said, "From Allah you came and unto Allah you have returned, as will happen to all who are born. Lord please forgive us for any of our shortcomings while we were on this earth of Yours and grant us Your Mercy" --- Amin!

Then I let go of my son physically, but his Spirit shall always be with me in memory.

The fact that I got to say goodbye to my son was indeed a great favor from The Creator, which enable me to lay my son to rest.

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When the day came to face at least two of the assailants, to my surprise, they were babies, not men, but babies! Questions arose in my heart, “how did children get a gun in their hands; what happen to them to cause them to act in such a manner; how did they loose the light of hope, happiness, good will, mercy, that children are born with; what environment has killed their spirit of love and honest behavior? The stronger the questions rang in my heart, the more I knew I needed to find the answers.

So, I lifted-up the curtain and looked underneath, then I found the answers, and so much more. As my heart filled with more tears from knowing the truth, my spirit, soul and heart soften; but at the same time, it strengthened my understanding that our communities have an infection, a disease, if you so will, called trauma. It is coming after our babies. Trauma begets crime, and the repeat of trauma begets the repeat of crime. This disease like any other disease needs antibiotic and probiotic like actions in our legislation and community projects like, “The Flowerpot Project” to eradicate this infection that is killing, especially our children from all walks of life.

I could continue with my son’s story, but that is not the only reason why I am standing before you. If, you wish to know more about my story, you are welcome to meet with me in a more personal sitting, and/or go onto the following websites:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0Z5SGI5Jdns;](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0Z5SGI5Jdns)

[https://www.webbyawards.com/winners/2019/video/general-video/documentary-shortform/the-power-of-forgiveness/?/;](https://www.webbyawards.com/winners/2019/video/general-video/documentary-shortform/the-power-of-forgiveness/?/) [https://youtu.be/ulUtf2qaKbE;](https://youtu.be/ulUtf2qaKbE) [www.themusketeerassociation.net;](http://www.themusketeerassociation.net)

You may also read, my story in a book I co-authored called, “Loss, Survive, Thrive” by renowned trauma therapist, Meryl Hershey Beck.

I’m here to resound in humble and certain voice that showing “true forgiveness, true mercy and doing actions of good, is the antibiotic and probiotic formula that will stop the pandemic of trauma that is effecting our communities across the nation, which is still increasing.

Our legislative laws and our community projects must support each other by introducing projects and laws that reflect actions aim at killing this disease of trauma!

SB-256 is one of those legislative Bills that is directly addressing this very truth. It aims to guide us to saving our future. All children are the future of mankind, that is an Innate Law. Our present-day legislation has been burying children alive, which in my soul, I know is very wrong.

Children are not born with guns in their hands. They are not born lying, stealing, cheating, hating, using bad language, etc. They are born with light in their eyes, hope in their hearts, happiness in their voices, and a curious mind. We did not put that in them, but we are the ones taking it out of them. Instead of our children reaching for the universe so they can catch a star, they are reaching down to pick up “weapons” (which come in many forms) to harm themselves and/or others.

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Another “innate law” which qualifies a civilization, civilized are at least three things, 1. “how we respect birth” (that covers from the day of conception to 40-years of development); 2. “how we honor our vintage people” (that means how we treat them in their aging years, gather their knowledge that we hope they have, enable them to share that knowledge with the youth, and ease their pain whenever we can), 3. “how we respect our dead” (that means never desecrating the graves, having memorials that at least respect their birth, never moving the graveyards to advance your profits, and always praying for them, because they can no longer pray for themselves).

I end this testimony, reminding this honorable Committee that “we the people” elected you, because we considered you as “men and women of understanding that pay heed”. This innate law, “children are the future of mankind” a truth that cannot be changed. SB-256 is a Bill that represents that understanding.

No one can say which child, from which part of our human existence will be the next “Noble Peace Prize Winner” or discover the cure of a disease. Each child is given a star to catch (that we did not put in them). It is our responsibility to teach them, all of them, how to reach for the universe, so they can catch that star. Not to traumatize, nor continue that traumatization by burying them alive, in prisons, or otherwise. That is a crime that we must put to an end.

This is my pledge to them and all of life on this earth:

“I pledge to stand forth as a constant reminder to myself and others to bring light, beauty and truth. To unify, honor and ignite a beacon of hope and goodwill across our neighborhoods, our communities, our cities, and our nation. Wherever there is despair, hopelessness, oppression, fear, injustice and humiliation. I will be that lighthouse directing all toward safety and justice until acts of tyranny reign no more; not even for one of us --- One for All and All for One”!

I’m now opened for any questions you wish to ask me.