

## Rowena Simmons's testimony for Bill SB0551

### **Who I am to Darius Gore**

My name is Rowena Simmons, the mother of Darius Gore. Darius was born at John Hopkins Bayview Hospital on September 12<sup>th</sup>, 1991, weighing 7lbs 8oz. Darius is my first-born child. Darius grew up on Dorchester Road and attended Forest Park High School. Our family moved on Carlisle Ave in 2007. I was Darius's mom, friend and the first person to teach him the meaning of love, patience. Our bond was stronger than ever because I had Darius when I was 27 yrs. Old. Darius meant everything to me, he saw me go through early adulthood. Darius basically taught me to grow up and he taught me about sacrifice. Darius was my inspiration for change for a silly young woman to being responsible. First born children are always special because I think they are your experiment child growing and learning about motherhood.

### **What has happened to me since the death of my son Darius Gore**

Darius's death has taken the life out of me. It's like losing a part of my soul. I never felt so emotionally stuck and drained before, it's like living in a dream. It's like a never-ending nightmare for me and I feel helpless. I sit down and think about what took place and how my son was in Sinai Hospital all alone with no family and friends at his bedside. Darius was not able to hear our voices or see our faces when he was in and out of consciousness. Darius has a family that loved his and that he has left behind that is struggling to get a grip on his death and how it suddenly happened. Darius was a caring and loving son, brother, uncle and friend to so many who loved him. This accident has left a big void in our lives because we were not able to properly be by his side nor was, we able to

say goodbye. I was not able to sit by his bedside to pray with him in the hospital due to the covid restrictions. I couldn't have proper funeral due to the early covid restrictions and with all of this it has brought tremendous trauma and strain on myself and family. Since Darius's death I haven't been able to go back into my community non-profit to work because of the pain and the constant memories and thoughts of Darius. Darius would help me with community events and special projects. I really cannot understand or wrap my brain around the idea of the police chasing a stolen vehicle through our city streets and neighborhoods in that manner to apprehend someone for a nonviolent stolen vehicle that caused the killing of my son. Due to this my son is gone forever and I will never hold or see my child again. I pray that no one else will have to bury their child because of a stolen vehicle chase.

### **Why I'm in support of Bill/SB0551**

I support Bill/SB0551 because police policy 1503 has had no significant requirements for Baltimore City law enforcement officers. Law enforcement has had a broad range of use of force and has had a broad range of use of force and has made a common practice of force instead of de-escalation practices. I believe this bill will hold the Baltimore City police department and its officers accountable. I believe this bill will hold the Baltimore City Police Department and its officers accountable and will add core principles for its officers and the police department to adhere to improved guidelines. The new bill will issue in better revised interventions and updated practices. This update will insure better communication, intense supervision, meticulous documentation, global positioning and approval systems and, knowledgeable de-escalating techniques. With my support of Bill SB/0551 I approve the bill and I would like to see better outcomes from the initiation of this bill. This bill is not only for the safety of Baltimore Citizens but also for those officers who took the oath to serve those who are in the communities.

Thank you,

Rowena Simmons