

Oral and written Testimony in my individual capacity

HB133 & SB43 Court Remote Public Access Act

January 23, 2023

Chairman Senator Will Smith, Jr. of the Judicial

Chairman Delegate Luke Clippinger of the Judiciary

Senator Jim Rosapepe

Vice-Chairman Delegate David Moon

Delegate Nicole Williams

Hello to all the Distinguished members of the Senate and the House,

I am Dr. Carmen Johnson. Today, I am the Director of Court Watch PG and Judicial Accountability. I am also the Founder of Helping Ourselves to Transform. I am the Chairwoman for Advocacy and Legislation for a re-entry board I helped create with other organizations over a year ago called MSARC under the US Attorneys office for the District of Maryland, Errek Baron. I also sit on countless other boards and committees as well in the DMV area including the United Nations. This is who I am today.

Subsequently.....

My path started out strong and successful for over 25 years full of accolades, awards and various prestige's positions across our Nation. I had a for profit company called Able Estate & Company that offered Financial Services to community members in the state of Maryland. I had a corporate attorney, CPA and a bookkeeper that had been with me for years back then. I was licensed by the State of Maryland to offer these services not understanding that when people left my office, I had no idea what they were doing with their credit, nor did I have control over what they was doing and it was not my business after they received financial services.

I also was the Founder and Executive Director of a non-profit called the Katie Able Foundation named after my grandmother. We taught our youth financial literacy, how to interact with elected officials from Congresspeople to County Councils members throughout Maryland, how to be an entrepreneurs, life skills and how to be strong leaders. We worked very closely with the Former Controller of the State of Maryland Peter Franchot to make financial literacy a requirement in schools in the State of Maryland. We also worked with Job Corp. The youth created a documentary called the Signs of the Times. The narrative was the melt down of Wall Street and the foreclosures sweeping across the country. I produced the film, and my youth directed it. We won awards and it was also show cased on DCTV and MDTV chopped up in 12 segments for 12 weeks. I had an adult board and a youth board of directors for our non-profit.

This is where my life changed and why HB133 and SB043 must pass.

While trying to create a GREAT future for our youth I became the “Housing Chair for the State Conference NAACP of Maryland”. I advocated for a moratorium to stop the foreclosures in the state of Maryland. I was all over the news and on every channel requesting a commission be set up by the state to investigate the foreclosures and I wanted to sit on this commission. The purpose was to try and understand why these foreclosures were happening throughout the Black and Brown communities and who was behind it. I had no idea that I was about to be politically hit and dragged through the ringer in this carceral system and accused of being the cause for (ALL) the foreclosures in the state of Maryland. It is one thing to plot to commit a crime, but it is a whole different thing when you are doing the right thing and get caught up in the injustice system web. I remember being placed under stress, duress and coercion to take a plea deal and I repudiated the offer - all the plea offers.

I went to trial in February 2015. It was so much strange things happening in the court room and I could not figure out what was going on. I had 4 different high profile attorneys at different times until I ran out of money. I ended up with a standby attorney picked by the courts who did absolutely nothing for me except pass notes back in forth to the judge and prosecute. I knew something was wrong, but I could not put my finger on it. I only knew I could not make sense of the appearance of strange activity that was happening right in front of me. It was a nightmare. They had put me in a real mortgage fraud case with 14 people not from this country and I think I was the only one that went to trial. I ultimately lost and was arrested immediately, as I was called ISIS, a terrorist and a danger to the state of Maryland – those words broke my heart, and it broke me. I was shipped away immediately, and I never saw my home again which ultimately went into foreclosure as well. I was not given the benevolence to handle my personal or business affairs. I now have large IRS debts, restitution of 2.4 million dollars – in which the 2 head scammers stated on the stand that I knew nothing about their scam and nor did I financially benefit. I still have another year of probation to complete after being home since 2018.

After 3 1/2 year experiencing brutal beatings by guards, torture and mental abuse because I refused to answer to inmate and criminal not to mention I filed a lawsuit on that prison camp with 21 defendants from the Warden, Staff and Guards because of the abuse. I still have the nightmares of the time about 10 or 20 male white guards jumped me, stomped, kicked and spit on me as I laid on the floor in a fetus position. That day they strangled me until I passed out. I came home broken mentally, spiritually, and financially. Not to mention I was homeless, and my credit was destroyed and I now I am labeled as a felon. I lost everything from my home to my clothes, nothing was left but bad debt, IRS issues and restitution of 2.4 million dollars that I did not benefit from. My first set of clothes and coat came from Walmart when I came to that halfway house. It was moldy, mildew everywhere with rats in the walls. I called a few friends that were happy to hear from me and when I called again, they had blocked me. The mental health abuse I substance going through trial, being transported from jail to jail, the

abuse at that federal prison camp, losing my home and all my personal items, all the debt I owed, IRS on my back and that large restitution bill still haunts me to this day. Not to mention my new prestigious title is FELON. Unable to move forward, left or right. Even the bankruptcy attorney denied giving me service. This has been a continued difficult situation to be in when your former name was The Queen of Financial Literacy.

As a practicing Buddhist for over 25 years, I had created 20 ways to kill myself after I came home. The embarrassment, lack of resources and mental health suffering I just could not handle. That is why I wrote a book called the Pretense of Justice. People need to hear what I went through. The worse is the strange things that happen in the court room that words can never express. I only know that if there was remote access in that court room, I know I would not have been found guilty and dragged off to jail.

However, the pain still runs deep. There is a silence that sweeps over me every night that reminds me that people and the system call me felon, criminal and defendant. I know the day will come when I will be freed from these titles that man has placed on me. I try to remember every day that I am LOVE, I am PEACE and I am still fighting to be free. Please vote on this bill SB43 and HB133 for Court Remote Public Access. We are not in 1823 we are in 2023. There should be transparency and accountability in the court rooms for our community in the state of Maryland.

Sincerely,

Dr. Carmen Johnson

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