

January 24, 2024

Jessica Mosley
Washington, DC 20016

TESTIMONY ON SB26 - POSITION: FAVORABLE

Criminal Law - Manslaughter by Vehicle or Vessel - Increased Penalties (Jamari's Law)

TO: Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee

FROM: Jessica Mosley

My name is Jessica Mosley. I am a resident of Washington, DC, but I lost a loved one who was a resident of District 31 in a motor vehicle crash in February 2021. I am submitting this testimony in support of SB26, Criminal Law - Manslaughter by Vehicle or Vessel - Increased Penalties (Jamari's Law).

My name is Jessica Mosley and Anthony Jean-Louis, known as AJ by his friends, was my friend whom I love deeply.

On February 8, 2021, AJ was driving home and Guarav Rawal got drunk, got behind the wheel, and killed him. More than being drunk, Mr. Rawal was speeding – over 100 mph – and was using his phone for Snapchat and texting. He then got out of his car, fled the scene, and attempted to pay a stranger to drive him home. All of this while AJ lay dead in the driver's seat of his Jeep.

While on house arrest, Mr. Rawal continued to post to Snapchat making light of his ankle monitors, showing people doing shots at the bar he owned, and claiming on social media that he was the real victim. In jail calls played at the sentencing hearing, Mr. Rawal continued to blame others, including AJ, for him being in jail and ruining his life. He showed no remorse for his actions.

This bill is about sentencing so Mr. Rawal's actions are important, but I also want to tell you about AJ.

AJ was 37. He served his country in the Army for 15 years. He lived his life as an upstanding and law-abiding citizen. He did everything "right." He was supposed to grow old with his brothers and sister and live out his dreams. I can close my eyes and see them sitting on a front porch telling stories of their wild, youthful days to the children

running around the yard. We were supposed to have more time with him. He was supposed to have more time.

AJ was one of the great ones. A kind soul. An honest man. He never made a promise he couldn't keep, and he never said anything he didn't mean. Yes, he was handsome and had an amazing smile, but his heart was what made him beautiful. He loved working with his hands. He loved television - all of it, even the really crappy stuff. He loved life. He experienced hardship but embraced each day full of joy and love. He was one of the only people I've ever met who said they didn't judge...and actually meant it. He accepted and celebrated you for exactly who you were. I am a better person for the years I had him in my life.

That is what Guarav Rawal stole when he chose to drunkenly get behind the wheel of that car - a car he knew he was not allowed to drive because he was required to have an interlock device on his car. He got in that car and drove almost twice the speed limit. He hit and killed AJ. He got out of the car and ran. Instead of checking on AJ, he selfishly - inhumanely - left AJ's lifeless body alone as he ran away.

On April 19, 2022, Guarav Rawal was sentenced to the maximum sentence for his crimes. I am sure there are those who think that is a lot of time, but it's not. With parole eligibility, that sentence will be greatly reduced.

The judicial process is supposed to be about justice. And honestly, I don't know that justice can be found. Justice would be for the man who did nothing wrong to have celebrated his 40th birthday and to spend the holidays with his loved ones. Justice would be for AJ to be here with us.

There may not be true justice, but there can be appropriate consequences for your actions and I believe that increasing the maximum penalty from 10 years to 20 years for negligent manslaughter is a step in that direction. Will everyone deserve 20 years? I don't know. But I must believe that AJ's life is worth more than 10 years. That the callousness of Mr. Rawal's grossly negligent behavior deserved more punishment than 10 years.

This law won't change the outcome for AJ's case, but I am submitting this testimony so hopefully a future victim's friends and family may get more justice and more peace because of the changes this bill will achieve. I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on SB26.