

# WRITTEN TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF THE PATH ACT

## **Criminal Procedure – Sentencing – Domestic Violence as a Mitigating Factor** *(Providing Alternatives Through Healing for Justice–Involved Individuals Act)*

I am Dr. Mildred Muhammad, award-winning speaker, certified domestic violence advocate, and survivor of long-term coercive abuse. I am also the former spouse of the individual later known publicly as the D.C. sniper. I am here in strong support of the PATH Act because it addresses a critical gap in how our justice system understands domestic violence, coercion, and accountability.

Domestic violence is not only physical. It includes coercive control, threats, intimidation, isolation, economic abuse, and psychological domination. These tactics strip victims of autonomy and force decisions rooted in survival. When courts cannot consider that context, sentencing becomes disconnected from the truth and from public safety.

Before the 2002 shootings, I repeatedly sought help from law enforcement and the FBI after my children were taken out of the country by their father instead of being returned from a scheduled visitation. Custodial interference is a first-degree felony and treated as kidnapping, yet no action was taken, even though I had a lifetime restraining order in place. I told authorities I was in hiding because he had said, “You have become my enemy, and as my enemy, I will kill you.” Instead of protection, I was told investigators wanted to place me in the middle of a parking lot and use me as bait to draw him out. I refused because no one would know where a bullet would come from.

After his arrest, I was treated not as a victim, but as a potential accessory. My security was removed. When I asked what would happen if he found and killed me, I was told, “That would have been an oops.” I had to retain a criminal defense attorney for my own protection and was subpoenaed during the trial.

The court refused to allow evidence of my domestic abuse to be introduced, ruling there was insufficient connection. Yet I was the reason he came to this area. Had he killed me, he would have gained custody of our children and could have accessed the \$100,000 victim compensation funds connected to the D.C. sniper case.

At the same time, the public was told to look for two White suspects in a white box truck. The reality was one Black adult male and one Black boy traveling in a Chevrolet Caprice. That misdirection mattered. It diverted attention away from my circumstances as the intended target while he remained free to stalk me.

The PATH Act does not excuse crime. It does not remove accountability. It gives courts the authority to consider credible evidence that domestic violence was a significant contributing factor, so sentencing reflects the full truth. I urge a favorable report on the PATH Act.