



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, an award-winning global keynote speaker, certified domestic violence advocate, and the former spouse of the D.C. sniper. I am here because the PATH Act, HB0084, addresses a truth this system has failed to confront, especially for Black women.

Because of his threats to kill me, a judge granted me a lifetime restraining order. However, visitation with our children was still included in that order. In 2000, before the shootings, he took our children out of the country instead of returning them from a scheduled visitation. I repeatedly sought help from law enforcement and the FBI. I told authorities I was in hiding because he told me, “You have become my enemy, and as my enemy, I will kill you.” I was not taken seriously.

Instead of protection, investigators told me they wanted to put me in the middle of a parking lot and use me as a decoy to lure him out, arrest him to return our children to me. I refused. I said he would shoot me from a distance and they would not know where the bullet was coming from. Their response was: they were just trying to help me out.

During the shootings, and without my knowledge, I was placed under security. I learned later that security was removed and reassigned to someone in authority. When I asked what would have happened if he found me and killed me, I was told they would have considered my death as an oops. After his arrest, I was treated as a potential accessory.

In the D.C. sniper case, the court refused to allow evidence of domestic abuse, calling it insufficient, even though law enforcement and the prosecutor stated I was the intended target and the reason he came to this region. That ruling erased domestic abuse from the courtroom.

If Attorneys Gretta Gardener and Patricia Baker-Simon had not stepped in to help secure my own criminal defense attorney, I would have been mischaracterized as an accessory to a crime I was surviving, not committing.

This is not just my story. It is what happens when Black women are not believed, not protected, and then criminalized for surviving. The PATH Act does not excuse crime. It allows courts to consider the full truth so accountability is grounded in reality, not bias.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge a favorable vote on the PATH Act.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dr. Mildred D. Muhammad