

Submitted by: Dr. Stacey Venable, paternal twin sister of Mr. Tracey Akins, Belcamp, MD (Harford County)

Senate Bill 35
Juvenile Court – Jurisdiction
Child Interrogation Protection Act
Support

Sen. William Smith and Honorable Senate Judiciary Proceeding Committee,

The day I almost lost my brother to the justice system...

As I set with my brother Tracey to scribe his testimony, It was one of the hardest things I have done in a very long time. Hearing my twin brother retell this story that almost took him from my family and I for life. I had to fight back the tears. He was so young and so innocent when this happened. My twin brother was being accused of rape.

That was a word that we had never heard in our home. What did this word mean and how was this going to affect him and our family? Because he was in the wrong place with the wrong friend, he could loss his life to the “Prison System” forever. As he was giving details, my thoughts went back to the day the detectives knocked on my Mother’s door. I remember my brother’s small frame silhouette in the sun sitting in the back of a police car. We gave eye contact as we always have. I was so afraid I would never see him again.

Months passed until trail day came. My family and I had never been in a courtroom. We didn’t know our rights and we had never known that Miranda Rights even existed. Each day I sat and listen to the Prosecutor say horrible things about my brother. They made him out to be a monster. I just kept my head down and prayed. Finally, the case was with the jury and his life was in their hands. Eight charges and each carried over 10 years. Just one charge would take him away from us.

As, we entered back in the courtroom my brother looked at me and all I would see in his eyes was fear. My mind went blank, and I just prayed. All I could hear was “NOT Guilty” and I begin to cry. I wasn't sure what had just happened. But I knew from that moment forward I would always be my brother’s keeper. And I have always fought for my brother since this happened.

This was a good and bad thing through the years. I became an enabler to him and all the things that had followed him through the years. From drug abuse, failed relationships and jail time. I can honestly say these things stemmed from what had happened to him within this case. My brother learned early not to trust even when you

are telling the truth. He had that know “one believes me anyway syndrome so why even try”. The impact of this is everlasting. The injustice he faced then he still battles with today.

I truly am thankful that even back then I knew the Lord. I PRAYED day and night at 15 years old as I continue to pray for my brother today. Back then I knew that only the Lord could spare his life. At the age of 15, I did not know why this was happening to my brother and my family; but now I know why.

This was all about my brother living through this injustice and telling his testimony now to save other young Black males. I will continue to tell his story as often as I ask this committee to issue a favorable report on SB 165.

Stacey Venable,

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Harford County Resident