

OPPOSITION TO SENATE BILL 842
MY TESTIMONY

Thank you for the opportunity to voice my concerns for Senate Bill 842. Such a bill sends chills throughout my being and causes me great pain.

Let me explain. My only Son was born in 1969 in Washington, D.C. Not wanting him to become a "victim" in DC by the time he turned 1 we had moved to Prince Georges County. He was educated in P.G. County Public Schools and graduated from Forestville High School. At the age of 12 he joined St. Paul Baptist Church, the oldest African American Church in the County. He remained an active member until March 22, 1999. The last live sight of my son was in Church on the night of March 21, 1999. The following night the city I took him out of as an infant took his life. Riding in his car with a friend to pick up her daughter in D.C. a bullet being fired struck him in the back of his head and took his life. I relive this event daily.

From 1999 to 2014 I rallied D.C. Police, the then Mayor and any and all officials that would listen to try and find my Son killer. We were told it was a case of mistaken identity. The police sources said they were looking for a guy driving a similar vehicle with DC tags. My Son vehicle had MD tags.

Fast forward to 2017 when 2 guys confessed to killing my only Son; they were sentenced and were to serve conservative sentences for his murder as well as other crimes. One Keith Fogle was in jail for a drug conviction. He was to finish that sentence and then start his sentence for my Son murder.

2 years ago DC passed a similar bill to this one. A Judge decided that Fogle had served enough time in Prison. Perhaps so for the drug conviction but not so for my Son murder. After serving only 51 days for the Murder of my Son Keith Fogle was FREE. Relatives, friends, Church members wrote numerous letters begging the Judge not to free him. Our letters felled on deaf ears. Letters to the Mayor and all Council members were never responded to. I am told that he immediately was hired by DC Mayor Bowser to work in her office.

The other confessed killer, to my knowledge remains in jail although he applied for Compassionate Release under the Pandemic COVID-19 Release Program but was denied by a different Judge.

In 2004 my beloved husband died calling out for his Son. He asked if they ever found who killed Junior and all I could say was No.

My Son left a mother, father, sister 3 daughters and a Son. His youngest daughter was born 7 months after his death. She never got the opportunity of meeting her beloved father. Over the years my daughter constantly lived in fear that her brother killers would one day come after us. She hovers over me like a hen does it chicks and often, twenty three years later, scream out in her sleep for her brother. Counseling has not helped and all I can do is Pray.

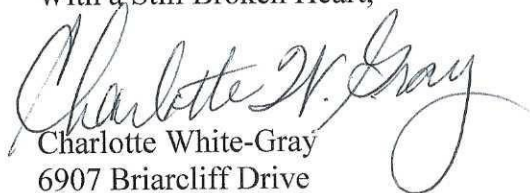
Senator Benson, I speak to you with a heart filled with pain. I understand you are a sponsor of this bill. You represent an area where killings are almost every day events. Do you not know the pain of the mothers, fathers, wives, children, sisters and brothers of those you represent? Have you seen the news reports from your area? Do you understand the greater hurt SB 842 will cause?

I am a Christian so I believe God gives us second, third, etc., chances and we should look at this bill as giving these criminals the same chance. Well I am sorry as the Mother who heart has felt extreme pain for twenty three years I cannot bring myself to accept this horror bill. I would be curious to know in states that passed such a bill how many criminals have been freed and how many has repeated actions of violence after being freed under such bills. Yes I am angry that these criminals who care nothing for others' lives can hurt families and get a pat on the hand and are placed back on the street to do more harm. They should be made to serve their full sentence. If they killed someone they should get life. They took a life that can't be reversed so they have no right to be free.

I recognize my personal case did not happen in Maryland however I have lived in Maryland for over 52 years. This is my home and I raised my children to respect the laws of the land. Such a law has destroyed my respect for the judicial system. I want you to see and know the impact and hurt my family is enduring because of unfair justice. We are victimized with the original killing, got a sense of justice during sentencing only to have it snatched from us by a Judge who didn't give s darn.

You see Senator Benson and all supporters of SB-842, I had a Son and he lived for 29 years staying free of the justice system. His name is Edward Conway Gray, Jr., and he did live. Today his sister and I along with his 4 children, 7 grandchildren, aunts, uncles, tons of cousins and a multitude of friends beg of you not to pass this Bill. This is not the time. Put yourself in our place, would you be sponsoring such a Bill if what happened to us had happened to you? I don't think you would.

With a Still Broken Heart,



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