

March 18, 2025

To: Chair Prozanski, Vice Chair Thatcher, and Members of the Seante Committee on Judiciary

Re: **Senate Bill 1179 - SUPPORT**

My name is Angela Kim, and I am a survivor of domestic violence. I am a college-educated, upper-middle-class woman—someone who, by all appearances, should have been safe. But domestic violence does not discriminate. It crosses all lines, affecting women of every background. And for too many, it doesn't just steal their safety—it steals their freedom.

I know this firsthand. I was choked until I passed out—many times. Each time, as I lost consciousness, I thought I was dying. I was stuffed into a closet at night, left to feel like I didn't exist. I was punched. I was kicked. And finally, the violence was so severe that I ended up in the emergency room. But escaping one abuser didn't mean I was free.

Like so many survivors, I went from one abusive relationship to the next. This time, I thought it would be different. I was wrong. The control, the threats, and the violence continued, but so did something else—coercion. I was forced into choices I never would have made on my own. I was threatened with the loss of my children, with more violence, with consequences I couldn't bear. Until one day, those choices led me to prison—I was sentenced to 17 and a half years in prison.

I was not a criminal. I was a victim. But the law did not see me that way. And I am not alone.

There are countless women behind bars today who were never the masterminds of any crime. They were manipulated, coerced, and forced into actions under the threat of suffering even worse. They were conditioned to obey, because disobedience meant pain, or death, or the loss of their children. And when they were finally caught, their abusers walked free while they bore the full weight of punishment.

The law should recognize this reality. Judges should have the ability to consider the role that domestic violence and coercion play in the choices survivors are forced to make. Sentencing should reflect that many of these women did not choose crime—they were driven to it by men who controlled every aspect of their lives.

When we fail to see the full picture, we are punishing victims for surviving. But we have the power to change that. We can create laws that acknowledge coercion. We can stop sentencing survivors as if they were the true perpetrators. And we can finally give these women the justice they deserve.

Thank you.