

May 2021

District Attorney Melinda Katz
Queens County District Attorney's Office
125-01 Queens Boulevard
Kew Gardens, NY 11415

Re: Resentencing Motion for Domestic Violence Survivor Deatrice Morris

Dear District Attorney Katz:

We, the undersigned organizations, strongly support the resentencing application of Deatrice Morris under the Domestic Violence Survivors Justice Act (DVSJA).

In 2013, Ms. Morris's abusive intimate partner, Lonnie Diggs, coerced her into serving as an unwilling accomplice to the murder of Franchesco Morales-Rodriguez. A forensic psychiatrist who evaluated her before trial concluded that Ms. Morris was the victim of extreme intimate partner violence who had participated in the killing of Mr. Morales-Rodriguez under duress – which, under New York law, would have been a complete defense. Furthermore, Ms. Morris cooperated fully and expressed remorse. Nevertheless, she was treated harshly by your predecessor as District Attorney, given a 15-year prison sentence and required to plead guilty to manslaughter. In contrast, Diggs, her abuser, was allowed to plead to a non-homicide offense and receive a shorter sentence.

The passage of the DVSJA codified our collective mission to raise awareness and understanding of how a background of trauma and abuse cannot be ignored within the criminal legal setting. The DVSJA was intended to be a landmark piece of legislation, extending a degree of leniency to survivors across a broad range of offenses, including crimes against third parties, as was the case here. We are disappointed that in the almost two years since the statute's enactment, there have been no resentencings in Queens County.

Ms. Morris has served more than seven years of her sentence. She has a supportive family and is ready to come home. She is a domestic violence survivor and is precisely who the DVSJA was intended to benefit. Those of us who have been working for many years to end gender-based violence urge you to consent to resentencing in this case.

Thank you for your consideration. We all look forward to welcoming Deatrice home.

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| 1 A Little Piece Of Light | Brooklyn, NY |
| 2 Block Builderz | Tulsa, OK |
| 3 California Coalition for Women Prisoners | Oakland, CA |
| 4 Center for Justice | New York, NY |

5	COYOTE RI	Rhode Island
6	Criminal Broads	New York, NY
7	Empowerment Collaborative of Long Island	Islandia, NY
8	Fearless! Hudson Valley, Inc.	Newburgh, NY
9	Freedom Agenda, Urban Justice Center	New York, NY
10	Hour Children	Long Island City, NY
11	Housing Plus Solutions	New York, NY
12	Lovelace Consulting Services, Inc.	Maryland
13	Mommieactivist and Sons	Washington, DC
14	Multi Assistance Resource Centers, Inc.	New York, NY
15	My Sisters' Place, Inc.	White Plains, NY
16	National Action Network Second Chance Committee	New York, NY
17	National Council for Incarcerated and Formerly Incarcerated Women and Girls	New York, NY
18	New Hour for Women & Children LI	Brentwood, NY
19	New York State Coalition Against Domestic Violence	Albany, NY
20	Prison Families Anonymous	Central Islip, NY
21	Providence House, Inc	Brooklyn, NY
22	PurpLE Health Foundation	New York, NY
23	Re/Creation writers collective	New York, NY
24	Rebuilding Independence My Style	Washington, DC
25	Release Aging People in Prison/RAPP Campaign	New York, NY
26	Safe Horizon, Inc.	New York, NY

27 Silent Cry Inc	New York, NY
28 Survived and Punished NY	New York, NY
29 Survivor Advisory Board	Deer Park, NY
30 Survivors Justice Project	Brooklyn, NY
31 The Public Science Project, CUNY	New York, NY
32 The Sex Workers Project of the Urban Justice Center	New York, NY
33 Ujima Center For Justice	Indianapolis, IN
34 Vday	San Francisco, CA
35 Vera House, Inc.	Syracuse, NY
36 VIBS	Islandia, NY
37 Woman's Work Goes On	Indianola, TX
38 Women & Justice Project	Queens, NY
39 Women's Community Justice Project	Brooklyn, NY
40 Women's Prison Association	New York, NY
41 Women's Community Justice Association	Brooklyn, NY
42 Women's Health, Incarcerated.	New York, NY