

Mrs. Shahnaaz Mason
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Mr. Vice President and Dr. Biden
Office of the Vice President
Washington, D.C. 20501

December 9, 2014

Dear Mr. Vice President and Dr. Biden:

Reverend Mason and I want to thank you for hosting our family along with the other wounded warriors at last week's dinner at your home. We felt your hospitality and enjoyed the splendor of the Christmas decorations.

I also want to thank Lieutenant Colonel Bakotic for taking the time to hear my concerns about the issues arising at the Fisher House. As I shared with her, a Vietnam-era patient and his wife voiced their distress to me about how the recent change in leadership there has negatively impacted their care. If you need their contact information, I can provide it. It pains me to know that these American heroes may be suffering during their weakest moments- when their country should be serving their needs as they recover from war wounds.

As I explained to you, Mr. Vice President, my husband ended up in the wounded Warrior Program as a result of wounds inflicted by his own men in the form of retaliation for reporting racism at one of his units. We discovered that a number of soldiers were receiving treatment at Walter Reed because they were forced to undergo 'mental evaluations' after reporting toxic leaders within their own units. This is a slap in the face to valiant soldiers who risk everything to blow the whistle on commanders who have become like gods determining which careers they will destroy in order to cover up horrific crimes. This egregious abuse of power must be checked immediately.

As promised, I am attaching the bill I drafted to reform the military adjudication process. See attached, the "Military Accountability and Justice Bill".

As I mentioned to you, the current system of reporting abuse of power, racism, and rape is so broken that many victims simply suffer in silence. They need a voice. I am willing to be that voice. My family has dealt with threats of every kind, been isolated, and ostracized, but we are not willing to go away quietly. We desire to ensure that justice can be served within the United States Armed forces—that those who are suffering under those who are abusing their power have a real vehicle to report abuses and obtain justice---and that those who may suffer in the future can be assured that there is a legitimate, effective legal process that will provide swift due process if needed. We want to take our experience with a failed system and make it right for others. This Bill is a first-step in doing that.

Last, on behalf of my husband, Reverend Mason, Captain, US Army, a wrong needs to be righted and an exemplary soldier should be afforded the opportunity to serve his country as a Chaplain. This can be achieved by a simple executive order rescinding his 'medical retirement' and promoting him to the rank of Major. At age 43, Gary is fully capable of fulfilling another 10 to 15 years of service to his country-maybe more. And not only is he capable, but he is uniquely qualified to minister to soldiers who have been to combat or who are suffering from friendly fire issues that continue to occur as we reform the system. My family desires to finish our assignment in service to other military families now that we have survived what no family volunteering on behalf of its nation should. We can now encourage and advocate for them-I, as a voice to Congress, and Gary as a compassionate Chaplain.

Scripture tells us that the righteous will exalt a Nation. As America faces its second Civil Rights Movement, we stand ready to help clean house in the military. The military should continue its legacy of leading the nation as it relates to race relations and justice for all its members. This is our opportunity to perfect our Union in this area once and for all. The entire world is watching to see how to handle their own potential race wars. If we handle ours properly, we will again be the example for the world to follow.

I stand ready to speak behind the scenes or out front-or to do whatever is necessary to assist in eradicating this form of injustice in my beloved country, and throughout the world.

Wishing you a blessed Christmas and holiday season.

Very Respectfully,

Mrs. Shahnaaz Mason

Encl. – Military Accountability and Justice Bill