

A Public Letter from the Stephens Family

In Pursuit of Justice for Qadira

Dear Friends, Neighbors, and Members of the Public,

We write to you not as adversaries to any system, but as a family — parents and a daughter —trying to protect what every parent is sworn to protect: the safety, dignity, and future of our child.

Seventeen years ago, our daughter Qadira was abused while still a minor. The institutions charged with her protection failed her. What began as a plea for help became a struggle for survival against silence, denial, and systemic suppression. Since then, we have sought truth, accountability, and justice through every lawful channel: court filings, peaceful protest, public testimony. Each time, we have been denied, not on the merits, but on the margins.

Our filings are dismissed before evidence is heard. Our protests are ignored or criminalized. Our daughter's legal status as a crime victim is deemed "immaterial." Meanwhile, other cases that are similar in form, but led by more politically connected or socially approved groups receive recognition, resources, and respect.

This is what white supremacy looks like in its modern form. It is not hatred or slurs. It is control over the levers of credibility, procedure, and voice. It decides whose pain counts, whose case gets heard, and whose child gets protection.

And it is breaking something sacred in our community.

We are not alone in this struggle. But we are often made to feel alone because the cost of naming the injustice is so high, and the mechanisms that uphold it are so normalized. When judges, agencies, and public officials appear more committed to shielding each other than protecting a Black child, it should trouble all of us.

We ask for your witness. We ask for your courage. And we ask for your voice, not just in support of our family, but in defense of the principle that no one should be denied justice because of their race, their means, or their independence.

To remain silent is to become part of the mechanism. To speak up is to begin dismantling it.

We still believe in justice. That's why we're still here.

With respect and urgency,

The Stephens Family