



RELEASE: The OK Survivor Justice Coalition Celebrates Unanimous (91-0) House Passage of the Oklahoma Domestic Abuse Survivorship Act (HB 1639)

Wednesday, March 22, 2023

Oklahoma City, OK--On March 22nd, the Oklahoma House of Representatives unanimously voted (91-0) to pass HB 1639, the Oklahoma Domestic Abuse Survivorship Act. The bill must now be considered by the Senate before returning to the House for a final vote.

The Oklahoma Survivor Justice Coalition, formed in mid-2022, has been advocating for the bill and for better treatment for survivors of violence who are in jails and prisons. It is estimated there are between 100-500 people in Oklahoma prisons today who were victims of domestic violence or committed their crimes in direct response to abusive treatment. Today, some members of the coalition reacted to the bill's passage out of the House:

"We are ecstatic that HB 1639 passed out of the Oklahoma House unanimously. This sends a strong message that our legislators understand the impact domestic violence has on our state, and that they are prepared to provide an avenue to justice for criminalized survivors undeserving of excessive prison sentences. This is a crucial first step to addressing the problem. However, any legislation that passes in the name of criminalized survivors must include retroactive sentencing relief for Oklahoma's survivors currently serving excessive sentences. We will be imploring the Oklahoma Senate to place meaningful sentencing relief back into the bill before passage." -- **Colleen McCarty, Founding Executive Director, Oklahoma Appleseed Center for Law and Justice**

"A great first step for survivors of domestic violence in Oklahoma!" **Tracey Lyall, CEO, DVIS**

"This is a momentous day for domestic abuse survivors in Oklahoma. Rigid and extreme sentencing laws have devastated far too many women and children in the Sooner State. The Oklahoma Domestic Abuse Survivorship Act will give courts the ability to resentence people convicted of crimes where domestic abuse was determined to be a significant factor and give courts the ability to consider additional context when handing down sentences. We could not be happier that this bill has seen such widespread, bipartisan support, being unanimously passed on the House floor and in committee." – **Alexandra Bailey, Senior Campaign Strategist at The Sentencing Project**



"Thank you, Oklahoma House of Representatives for unanimously passing HB 1639! There is hope for our women who were victims of Domestic Violence." -- **Paula Marshall, CEO Bama Companies, Inc.**

"As someone who is the family member of a survivor currently being punished for fighting back against her abuser, I am thrilled the Oklahoma House voiced their support for future survivors in passing HB 1639. Though we must do more to correct unjust sentencing in this state, it is a first step toward making sure this happens to no one else." - **Amanda Ross, Impacted Family Member and Founder, Free April Wilkens**

"Oklahoma has a national and shameful reputation for the disproportionate incarceration of women. Today, the Oklahoma House made progress on that embarrassing record by unanimously voting to support HB 1639 and women who are victims of domestic violence. Much more is needed but this step is so encouraging." – **Lauren Brookey, Oklahoma Criminalized Survivor Coalition Volunteer**

