



August 26, 2016

Trumbull County Prosecutor Dennis Watkins
Trumbull County Administration Building, 4th Floor
160 High Street, NW Warren, Ohio, 44481

Dear Prosecutor Dennis Watkins:

As the federally-recognized state domestic violence coalition representing over 1,000 survivors, advocates, organizations and allied individuals across California, we write in support of Bresha Meadows, a child witness and victim of domestic violence. We support Bresha alongside domestic violence organizations and over 5,000 concerned individuals nationwide. We understand that Bresha Meadows is currently being held in Trumbull County Ohio Juvenile Detention Center awaiting a pretrial hearing. We humbly request that Bresha, a young girl who has been seriously impacted by violence in her family, is released and that all charges against her are dropped.

As domestic violence advocates, we see Bresha as one of 15.5 million children in America that are exposed to domestic violence each year. As such, Bresha needs extensive support for her trauma and an opportunity to rebuild her life. We do not see Bresha as a danger to others. Rather, we see her as a young girl who is in desperate need of supportive services, and we are concerned about the long-term traumatic impacts of incarceration and prosecution on her well-being and ability to heal.

We understand that Bresha witnessed extreme acts of domestic violence from her father for years, and that she sought support from relatives and law enforcement in the months before she allegedly shot her father in defense of her mother and herself. We also understand that there is documented evidence of domestic violence from 2011 when Brandi Meadows filed for a protective order. Accounts of the abuse are corroborated by Martina Latessa, a member of law enforcement and Bresha Meadows' aunt. As a young girl with few options, she was understandably scared for her family members' lives. Witnessing domestic violence as a child, particularly such extreme physical violence, is deeply traumatic for children. In spite of this, Bresha repeatedly sought help from family members and police. We are very concerned that prosecuting and incarcerating Bresha in this context sends a chilling message to domestic violence victims and their children—that even in the most desperate of situations, they will be met with additional trauma instead of the help that they need.

We respectfully urge you to take into account the unique circumstances present in this case, and to drop all charges against Bresha Meadows. As a child victim of domestic violence, Bresha is not a threat to public safety. Rather, she is in need of a safe and supportive environment to heal and rebuild her life.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kathy Moore". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping tail on the "e".

Kathy Moore, MSW
Executive Director