**Email address:** rebecca.harris.mp@parliament.uk

**Suggested Subject: Southend Amnesty International Group – Domestic Abuse Bill**

**Email to Rebecca – to arrange a meeting**

Dear Rebecca

We are writing you as members of the Southend Amnesty International Group, based within your constituency of Castle Point. We hope you are keeping well and safe in these uncertain times.

We have recently become aware that you have the important role of sitting on the Committee that will scrutinise the Domestic Abuse Bill. Given your appointment, we would warmly welcome the opportunity to speak with you over the phone, or as part of a video call, to discuss the Bill in more detail, along with the draft amendments we hope you will support.

Amnesty welcomes the Government’s leadership on this important issue and has been working to ensure this landmark piece of legislation is as ground-breaking as it can be. However, we are concerned that in its current form, the Bill fails to provide a system that is fair and accessible to all – including those most marginalised and isolated, particularly migrant women.

We have enclosed a full briefing that provides detailed information, along with the amendments we would like to see made to the Bill. For ease of refence, these are:

1. Ensure all survivors of domestic abuse can equally access support, welfare systems and legal tools that provide protection from abuse, without discrimination on any grounds
2. Amend the Bill to include a provision establishing safe reporting mechanisms for survivors accessing vital public services, so they can safely report abuse to the police, social services, health professionals and others with confidence they will be treated as victims and without fear of immigration enforcement
3. Extend the existing Domestic Violence Rule and associated Concession to all migrant survivors of abuse (it currently is only accessible to those on spousal visas). This would enable victims to apply to regularise their immigration status independently of their partner and – critically – ensure they can access life-saving refuges and other welfare support public while their application is considered.

These recommendations for the Bill are supported by the Step Up Migrant Women Coalition, a network of more than 40 organisations, including Amnesty International UK, and led by a steering group of ‘by and for’ BME and migrant women organisations. The recommendations were also supported by Parliament’s Joint Committee on the draft Domestic Abuse Bill, chaired by the Rt Hon Maria Miller MP, which reported last summer.

We understand it is currently an incredibly busy time for you now, but we would appreciate any time you are able to spare in your packed schedule to meet with us and discuss this further. We look forward to hearing from you and please do not hesitate to let us know if you have any questions.

With warm wishes

X

**Email to Rebecca – to inform on issue, no meeting**

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We have recently become aware that you have the important role of sitting on the Committee that will scrutinise the Domestic Abuse Bill. Given your appointment, we wanted to write to you to share a detailed briefing, along with outlining the draft amendments we hope you will support.

Amnesty welcomes the Government’s leadership on this important issue and has been working to ensure this landmark piece of legislation is as ground-breaking as it can be. However, we are concerned that in its current form, the Bill fails to provide a system that is fair and accessible to all – including those most marginalised and isolated, particularly migrant women.

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