

## House Resolution 1345

By: Representatives Santos of the 117<sup>th</sup> and Gunter of the 8<sup>th</sup>

## A RESOLUTION

- 1 Recognizing Nicole Boynton; and for other purposes.
- 2 WHEREAS, Nicole Boynton was the first person in the State of Georgia to be re-sentenced  
3 under the Survivor Justice Act; and
- 4 WHEREAS, Nicole acted to protect herself against her abusive boyfriend, who she began  
5 a relationship with when she was just a child; and
- 6 WHEREAS, Nicole was 18 years old when she was sentenced to life in prison; and
- 7 WHEREAS, the number of women incarcerated in Georgia's prisons has increased by 600  
8 percent since 1980, and between 74 and 95 percent of women who are incarcerated have  
9 experienced domestic or sexual violence; and
- 10 WHEREAS, in domestic violence relationships when violence and the threat of violence  
11 have been constant, or have escalated over time, assessed risk is based on a history of abuse  
12 and that abuse often leads to clinical assessments of being in "extreme or severe danger"; and  
13

14 WHEREAS, the ongoing threat of harm, terror, and manipulation wielded by domestic  
15 violence abusers serve as tactics of power and control that create multiple, intersecting  
16 pathways to incarceration; and

17 WHEREAS, with the passage of The Survivors Justice Act, Georgia law can better recognize  
18 when a survivor acts in self-defense, has been coerced into criminal activity, or whose  
19 conviction was otherwise brought about by the abuse they experienced; and

20 WHEREAS, the Survivor Justice Act permits survivors to receive a reduced sentence or to  
21 be re-sentenced when abuse was a significant contributing factor in their offense, allowing  
22 survivors to have the full context of their situation considered at both trial and sentencing;  
23 and

24 WHEREAS, while Nicole was incarcerated she was taken on as a client with the Georgia  
25 Coalition Against Domestic Violence's Justice for Incarcerated Survivors program where she  
26 was paired with the law firm of Alston & Bird who worked on her case pro bono for five  
27 years; and

28 WHEREAS, after being paired with Alston & Bird, Nicole's life sentence was vacated and  
29 she was released from prison after serving 23 years; and

30 WHEREAS, while Nicole was incarcerated she earned her GED and completed vocational  
31 training to prepare for the working world including getting her welding, cosmetology and  
32 food truck licenses, getting her CNA certification, and completing other courses with Life  
33 University; and

34 WHEREAS, ensuring that sentencing reflects both accountability and the full context of an  
35 offense strengthens public confidence in the justice system and promotes safer communities;  
36 and

37 WHEREAS, while incarcerated, Nicole facilitated domestic violence support groups as a  
38 Peer Mentor and supported other survivors who were also incarcerated; and

39 WHEREAS, Nicole has children and grandchildren, who she is excited to reunite with; her  
40 son Romello testified in support of her at the re-sentencing hearing, he was just 4 years old  
41 when she went to prison and now is 27 years old and lives in New York; and

42 WHEREAS, Nicole is kind, compassionate, generous, and thoughtful, she is motivated and  
43 strong, and she is sharing her story with others in order to do whatever she can to help other  
44 survivors and justice-impacted women.

45 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES that  
46 the members of this body recognize Nicole Boynton and commend her unwavering  
47 commitment to justice.

48 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Clerk of the House of Representatives is authorized  
49 and directed to make an appropriate copy of this resolution available for distribution to  
50 Nicole Boynton.