

Hello, My name is Lisa Clay, and I am so honored to be here with you today and for the opportunity to tell you my story and why I support this bill. I am a Survivor of domestic violence and I am living with a traumatic brain injury and a sever seizure disorder.

I hold a bachelor's degree from the University of Texas, and started my career as a financial planner at Fidelity after graduation once 9/11 happened I went to work for Haliburton and went to both Afghanistan and then Iraq working as a warfare cost specialist. That is where I met the co-worker who would become my husband and who would become my abuser. We moved to Denver, I passed my certification exam and became a financial advisor working downtown. Together we earned a comfortable living, over 6 figures.

The abuse was severe in every possible way, verbally, emotionally and financially. Even though I was confident and competent in the workplace, inside my home I was not allowed to have access to our accounts but was given a debit card with 200 dollars a month on it for allowance. I was a servant in my own home.

The physical violence escalated and I was beaten, strangled, and was repeatedly thrown down a flight of stairs in our home. One day My head hit the wall on the way down and I started having multiple seizures that would not stop. I woke up two days later and had no memory of what happened to me. It was after that incident that I left, filed for divorce and a restraining order to protect myself and my children in 2012.

I left, but the seizures were just starting and it was confirmed I have suffered a traumatic brain injury. My neurologist believes my condition was caused by the domestic violence and so do I. My seizures are so severe it was necessary to implant a Vagus Nerve Stimulator (VSN) this February. My doctor says it will take at least 6 months to see if the device and the medications are working.

When I have a petit mall seizure I do not know where I am or who I am for up to 30 minutes at a time. I get lost and it is terrifying. Sometimes I walk in circles. I cannot drive a car, I cannot work at the same professional level I trained for. I am thankful I can work a part time job at Panera.

My ex-husband lives in the Springs and makes 6 figures on his own now. My statute of limitations ran out at the same time I was fighting for my life and figuring out what the abuse had done to my brain and navigating a divorce.

I do strongly feel like I am making progress and am getting better. A couple of months ago I was not speaking in complete sentences. I am so thankful to be alive, and be here and able to share my story with you. It is so important to me that we allow other Survivors to seek justice and hold offenders accountable.

Thank you and please vote yes on HB 1398.

Sincerely,

Lisa Clay