

Testimony of Tammy Nobles
“Dream Deferred: The Urgent Need to Protect Immigrant Youth”
May 8th, 2024

Good morning and thank you for having me here today. My name is Tammy Nobles. I am the mother of Kayla Hamilton.

July 24th, 2002, was one of the best days of my life. I gave birth to a beautiful baby girl and named her Kayla Marie. She loved to laugh and smile. She treasured her friends and family and never forgot anyone. She was kind, caring, thoughtful, funny and human. She loved life and God. She showed the world that being yourself was ok and you didn't have to follow everyone else. But sadly, on July 27th, 2022, I received the worst news that a parent doesn't want to hear that my newly 20-year-old daughter Kayla Hamilton was murdered in her own room and left on the floor like trash.

At first, we knew very few details of the murder until an arrest was made. The details we learned broke us. At the end of March of 2022 Kayla's murderer was apprehended by Border Patrol crossing illegally into the U.S. at the southwest border in Rio Grande City, Texas, he was a 16-year-old known gang member affiliated with MS-13 in El Salvador. The MS-13 motto is “kill, rape and control”. He entered the country as an unaccompanied alien child and told Homeland Security that he was in fear of his life because of the gang activity in El Salvador. Department of Homeland Security failed to visually check the assailant's body and did not make that one phone to El Salvador to check his background. Department of Health and Human Services operational neglect included its employees violating clearly articulated protocol requiring a minor to be placed with a "verified" relative before entering the US. Department of Health and Human Services employees neglected and recklessly failed to verify a legitimate family member of the assailant or sponsor before allowing him to enter U.S. soil. The operational neglect committed by Department of Homeland carried over into Department of Health and Human Services whose operational neglect further sealed my daughter's fate.

As a UAC the murderer was allowed to go with his aunt who lived in Frederick, Maryland. There were behavioral issues with him living with his sponsor so he was freely allowed to go live with his half-brother who lived in the same neighborhood as Kayla and her boyfriend. A short time later behavioral issues started and the half-brother did not want him living there. The half-brother called the leasing office who were also the owners of the many mobile homes in the neighborhood if she had any rooms for rent. Sadly, she allowed this underage MS-13 gang member to rent a room in the same mobile home as Kayla and her boyfriend along with another young family.

Kayla's murderer was living there less than 5 days before he viciously murdered my daughter. Kayla held 2 jobs. She was working at a cleaning company and at Weis grocery store. Kayla had autism but she was determined to live independently and make her way in this world. And my baby paid the ultimate price. She had just gotten home from working the night shift and she said goodbye to her boyfriend that morning when he left for work. She then went to sleep. The murderer went into Kayla's room startling her, grabbed her IPod charger and wrapped it

around her throat and face while strangling her to death. Kayla grabbed her phone and called her boyfriend but went it to voicemail. The voicemail of the murderer strangling Kayla was 2 minutes and 30 seconds long. The murderer then violently sexually assaulted Kayla. Kayla's boyfriend came home from work and found her dead on the floor. The charger cord was so tight around her neck and face that her boyfriend had to use his teeth to get it off. The murderer robbed her of her phone and \$6.00. He then went to lunch with his half- brother like nothing happened. Local police didn't have enough evidence to arrest the murderer they called ICE - Immigration Custom and Enforcement and asked the agency if they can hold him until the DNA results came back because of the flight risk the murderer needed to be held in a secured location and ICE refused. So the Aberdeen Police department had no choice but to call Child Protective Services to take custody of him. The Aberdeen Police Department made a director order to have the agency to have him placed in a secured location due to the violent and horrendous crime. Child Protective Services took him into custody and later police found out that Child Protective Services placed him in an unsecured children's home with other children – even knowing that he was the main suspect in a premediated murder case. Again, there were behavioral issues at the children's home so he was removed and then placed with the foster family until he was arrested. When he was arrested for Kayla's murder he laughed and smirked.

Let's take a moment and think about how Kayla felt that day. How scared she must have been that day knowing that she was dying. And if she was going to see her mommy again, her baby sister, her brother or her cat Oreo. Kayla fought for her life that day with all that she had and in the end, she lost to an individual that wasn't even supposed to be allowed in the country.

How many youths were let in that were just like Kayla's murderer? With the failed and neglected vetting and background checks we have no idea who we are allowing in. Not all are innocent children and seeking the American dream. Some are criminals and are here to destroy American lives.

For me, this not a political issue this a safety issue for everyone living in the United States. This could have been anyone's daughter. I don't want any other parent to live the nightmare that I am living. I am her voice now and I am going to fight with everything I have to get her story told and bring awareness of the issues at the border.

If we had stricter border policies my daughter would still be alive today. Nothing will bring my daughter back nor fix the pain of not having her here, but I want to prevent this from happening to someone else's child. This isn't about immigration this is about protecting everyone in the United States.