PLEASE DOWNLOAD THIS TEMPLATE, AND FILL IT IN AND THE EMAIL IT TO YOUR MP. DO NOT WRITE ON IT HERE!!

The Rt Honourable **(name of your MP here)**
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

Via email: **(email address of your MP here)**

YOUR ADDRESS:

City / Town, today's today date

Dear XXXX

I am writing to you as my MP and I ask you to take up my concerns with the Secretary of State for Justice, Rt Hon Dominic Raab.

I would like to extend my support of The View's call for immediate amendment of the Domestic Abuse Act, in order to create a legal defence for women who have been victims of abuse and violence by their partners, who then go on to commit a crime, for which they are tried in court. The View is a campaigning platform for women in the justice system, they publish a quarterly magazine which amplifies their voices and is filled with their testimonies, art and poetry. Leading judges and barristers also provide content.

I am attaching a link to the tragic case of a woman who should not have been imprisoned.

https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/m00114ch

She was sentenced to 40 months imprisonment for perverting the course of justice. She and her baby were attacked by her partner brutally, he threatened her not to go to the police, and under extreme pressure, and in fear of her life and that of her child, she lied about the identity of her attacker.

She is one of countless numbers of women failed by the state and the agencies meant to protect them. She was known to the police as a victim of serious abuse. She called repeatedly for help. No one came.

Prison is not the place for women who have gone through serious violence and abuse. Prison further causes them harm and traumatises them, it separates them from their children and their responsibilities as carers are passed onto strangers and social services. Children become vulnerable to abuse and intergenerational trauma. The cycle of crime perpetuates into the lives of these children and little is known or understood, let alone reported about what happens to these children once women are sent to prison. Over 17 000 children are left at home when a mother is sent to prison, less than 5% stay in the family home, compared to 95% when a father is set to prison.

Of the 3,100 women prisoners in England, only 10% of them are said to be a risk to themselves or to others and, in addition, more than 60% of them are serving a 6 month or less custodial sentence. The government is currently building 500 more prison places for women which would mean a 15% rise. Prison is not a responsible or effective use of public funds. This leads to sentence inflation and judges seem to keep prison places full.

The View is calling for more community service sentences, the better use of women's centres and the increased use of Home Detention Curfews and electronic monitoring. Their immediate release not only will be justified, but it will also alleviate the pressure that prison staff are suffering to maintain health standards and indeed their own morale. Stemming the flow of women into prison is an urgent issue and I'm asking you to speak with the Secretary of State for Justice about my concerns about disproportionately heavy, dangerous sentences for women who have been victims of abuse. Why are we sending vulnerable women to prison?

The sentencing measures implemented by the courts are not only inefficient due to the overcrowded state of prisons, but most importantly, they constitute inhuman and degrading treatment towards prisoners. In fact, prisoners convicted of non-violent offences who, above all, are also vulnerable by virtue of their mental health, are being denied any early release, which constitutes a violation of Article 6 and 7 of the International Convention on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR).

I thank you for taking the time to read my letter and passing on my concerns to the Minister of State for Justice. I welcome the opportunity to meet or speak on the phone. If you would like a free sample copy of The View, please request one, via your constituency office by email, Hello@TheViewMag.org.uk .

Yours Sincerely,

Your name

Your address.