FINAL SUBMISSION

RE: Jason Poole opening statement on the Criminal Law (Sexual Offences, Domestic Violence and International Instruments) Bill 2025 Joint Committee on Justice, Home Affairs and Migration on Tuesday 20th January 2025.

Good afternoon, firstly on behalf of my family and Jennie's Law campaigners I want to thank you for inviting me here today to meet with the Committee.

My name is Jason Poole I am the brother of the late Jennifer Poole and the campaigner for Jennie's Law.

Since the untimely death of my sister, I have worked tirelessly to campaign to have supports in place for victims of Domestic Violence some which have been implemented while others like the public register for those convicted of Domestic Violence and other offences is in progress which is why we are here today.

The work myself and my family have done in the last four years campaigning for this register which many of you are aware of has led us to having this proposed bill in front of you today.

In the last four years I have had extensive interactions with Minister McEntee, Minister Harris and the current Minister Jim O'Callaghan. We as a family had several setbacks with different elements and I understand why the majority could not happen, but we will not go away and will not give up on saving other women and giving them the tools to keep themselves safe.

Ministers, TD's and many organisations write to me and tell me how brave I am and how proud Jennifer would be of me. I am not doing this for credit or for anyone to be proud of me. I would much prefer to have my sister with me and so would her children. Instead, we are doing it for 277 women who have been murdered, the 65,000 women who called the guards last year, the 32,144 women who contacted women's aid and the many many victims who have reached out to other organisations.

We are doing it for the survivors of domestic violence, the families of the people in this room but most importantly for Jennifer's two children.

We are aware that with every law comes its official title or technical term. Our wish from the very first day of this campaign is that this law would be known as Jennie's Law and we as a family wish for you sitting here in this room to continue our wish.

As a family we are happy with the current progress and work by those who believe in this bill and given the tools for others to keep themselves safe. To date we are happy with the proposed bill and the progress that it has made. Coming into Dail Eireann 4 years ago with an idea to create a law to combat the failures my sister suffered with the current systems in place was no easy task. We are extremely happy with the work we did but we never wished to have to do it. It is too late for Jennifer and the other 276 women.

I would ask for this committee and the Department of Justice to implement this bill as quickly as possible so that we provide the support to those who need it through this bill.

For those of you who do not know Jennifer's story. Jennifer was a 24-year-old mother, daughter, sister and friend who was murdered by her ex-partner Gavin Murphy on 17th April 2021.

Jennifer loved life and was a real family person. She would always have a smile even when life as we found out was not so great for her behind closed doors. Jennifer was one of the most caring people you could meet. She was independent, ambitious and always set herself a challenge. Jennifer was a very intelligent girl who loved music and dance and playing Sports with the local GAA club.

She worked in a nursing home caring for the elderly a job she truly enjoyed. Jennifer had just finished her college courses and learned how to drive, something she like ourselves were very proud of.
Jennifer got into a relationship with Murphy and he quickly moved into her home telling her he had nowhere to go as he had just returned home from Spain where he had lived.

As the months went on so did the control, the financial, emotional and physical violence. This went on for 11 months. Jennifer had tried many times to end the relationship and finally did the week prior to her death and as we all know now this is the most dangerous time for a person who has left this type of relationship.

It was only in court during Jennifer's trial that we really heard exactly what Gavin Murphy was and who he was. He was a man who had done this many many times and had done a prison sentence for Domestic Violence in the past with the use of a knife. He was not returning from Spain as he told us, instead he was released from prison.

Jennifer and the many other women had no idea of the past of these preparators and had no way of finding out in order to keep themselves and in many cases their children safe.

Domestic and gender-based violence against women has become far too common. We have reached crisis levels with an alarming rise in the numbers in recent years of call outs and deaths.

We need Jennie's Law, we need that tool kit for women and men to be able to check those who they are in relationships with especially in those relationships where domestic violence and coercive control are part of the relationship.

With all this said I would like to ask the committee and the Department to consider the following recommendations.

I would ask the Minister to include in his short and commencement that the Act shall be known as Jennie's Law and referred to as Jennie's Law.

That in cases that go before the courts and where a conviction is issued that the minister ensures correct supports are in place for the victim and that the victim would be given as part of the process a barring order or protection order against the convicted person.

I would ask that the Minister would include and outline relevant supports which would include Domestic abuse court liaison officers and to ensure that the victim has access to legal aid, relevant orders and trauma informed practices

I refer to part 3 Section 57 of the Principal Act part 4. "A convicted person may after three years from the date of conviction of the relevant offence" I would ask the Minister to expand the three years to a much longer time frame.

I would ask the minister to ensure that the full judgement is on the webpage and not removed after the 3 years.

I would also ask the Minister to insert a section into the bill where a person's conviction requires a prison term that their time on the register only begins from the date of release following conviction and prison time.

I would ask that the Minister under part 3 Section 57 of the Principal Act part 6 “relevant offences” ensure that under these offences where a person has convictions for those outlined offences that Family Law courts would have access to that relevant conviction.

I would also ask that the Minister and department to consider a situation where a person causes harm against the children of their partner that they would be included on the register.

Finally, I would ask the committee and the Department to push this process as quick as possible as while we continue this process others are being failed by the system. I speak to victims daily and each one of them hopes and wishes for the day they can access this register and not end up in the same situation again or have their families in the situation we are in following the death of Jennifer.

On a personal note I would like to thank Paul McAuliffe and Senator Fiona O’ Loughlin for their belief, support and encouragement over the last four years.

Thank you for listening.