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President Joseph R. Biden  
The White House  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

I write in support of the pardon application of Ms. Kemba Smith Pradia. I have known Kemba for more than two decades and have followed her work and advocacy to reform our criminal justice system very closely.

As a student at Hampton University, she unwittingly became marginally involved in her then-boyfriend's drug conspiracy. Despite her extremely minor role and being the victim of domestic violence, she was sentenced to 24.5 years in federal prison. Kemba's situation is what is often referred to as the "girlfriend problem" – where someone, usually a woman in a relationship with a drug trafficker, is held liable for the entire quantity of drugs charged in the conspiracy. Ironically, the girlfriend who may have just taken a phone message or dropped someone off at a drug deal too often ends up being sentenced to a lengthier prison term than the actual operators of the drug conspiracy because they are unable to provide "substantial assistance" to the prosecution to reduce their sentence due to their minor role.

As her congressman, I took an active interest in her case and got to know Kemba and her family very well. I urged President Clinton to grant her clemency, which he did in 2000 after she served six and half years in prison. Since that time, I have watched Kemba become a model citizen and role model, using her experience to educate others and advocate for much needed reform to our criminal justice system. She went on to finish her college degree at Virginia Union University and was later awarded a Soros Justice Postgraduate Fellowship. In 2014, Virginia Governor Terry McAuliffe appointed her to serve on the Virginia Criminal Sentencing Commission, and in 2019 Governor Ralph Northam appointed her to the Virginia Parole Board. She has published a book, "Poster Child," about her experience in the criminal justice system, and has been the subject of several documentaries and a recent BET movie. She speaks regularly on college campuses, at national conferences, and has testified before Congress and the United Nations.

Despite her remarkable work and advocacy over the last 23 years, she is still labeled a felon and continues to deal with all the collateral consequences of that label. President Clinton's clemency was just the first step toward correcting what I believe was a gross miscarriage of justice when

Kemba was first charged, convicted, and sentenced in 1994. Kemba did not take that second chance for granted and has become a dedicated mother, model citizen, role model and advocate for justice. I believe she has more than demonstrated that she is deserving of a full presidential pardon.

I hope that you will give her application for a pardon your full and fair consideration so that she can once again enjoy all the rights, privileges, and benefits of citizenship.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Bobby Scott", is written above the printed name.

ROBERT C. "BOBBY" SCOTT  
Member of Congress