

Date of Hearing: 2/28/2023

Claire Wilk

District 14

TESTIMONY ON SB480- POSITION: FAVORABLE
Mental Health Law - Assisted Outpatient Treatment Programs

TO: Chair Griffith, Vice Chair Klausmeier, and members of the Finance Committee

FROM: Claire Wilk

OPENING: My name is Claire FitzGerald Wilk. I am a resident of District (14). I am submitting this testimony in support of SB480.

I am a recently retired MCPS Elementary School Reading teacher, very active member of NAMI Montgomery, and the mother of two mentally ill children. I deeply care about this bill. I only have one living child now with mental illness. The other child, James Wilk, lost his life to suicide due to his mental illness. With James, we tried so hard to help him. I called the crisis center several times, but they never really helped. They would basically let me know that if he wasn't trying to take his life when I called, then there was nothing that they could do. They were "So sorry..." Right now, my other mentally ill son is not getting the best help for his mental illness. He is given some psychiatric prescriptions, but they just aren't really helping him. He needs more treatment. Now, he has turned to hard drugs to help medicate himself. If SB480 passes, my husband and I will be able to help our son get the best treatment. It really is a life and death situation. My son is bright, with an honors college degree, and he has a caring personality. He has the ability to contribute to our world, once he is mentally stable and free of addiction. Please help him, and help us by passing this bill.

Bill SB480 will greatly improve the lives of the people in Maryland. Families will be able to get the help that they need to treat their loved ones with mental illness and drug addictions. If SB480 was in place when my son, James, was alive, I think that we could have saved his life. James had a very promising future, but his illness cut his life off before it could even get started.

I am very much in favor of Bill SB480. The bill will help families, like mine, who are trying desperately to help their suffering loved ones, to get the services that they need.

I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on SB480.