

Mental Health - Emergency Evaluation and Involuntary Admission Procedures and Assisted Outpatient Treatment Programs

Testimony for SB 453

Finance Committee

Date: February 20, 2024

From: G.F., District 15, Montgomery County

POSITION: FAVORABLE

I have 45-year-old daughter who has struggled with multiple neurological and psychiatric problems throughout her life.

She was unfortunately exposed to a slow carbon monoxide leak in our home over a 30-month period prior to first grade. This impact on her developing brain resulted in impaired judgement and memory.

Her teen years were marked by personal and social turmoil. She had an Individual Educational Plan (IEP), was seen by therapists, and placed on Ritalin. But her poor judgement and impulsivity led to misuse of the medication, poor friend choices, alcohol use, sniffing, cutting, and suicide attempts. She graduated from high school but only after being bounced around between many programs.

My daughter received many varied diagnoses over the years, including ADHD, Bi-Polar Disorder, Multiple Personality Disorder, Schizophrenia, and PTSD. She either did not take the prescribed medication, failed to participate in treatment, or combined the medications with other drugs and alcohol. She was unable to continue her education or remain employed and sometimes was homeless.

At one point I declared bankruptcy due to the costs of caring for her. When she qualified for disability payments, I was granted financial authority over her income in order to pay for her treatment and other needs.

The passage of time and increased maturity has helped mitigate the worst of her symptoms. She is now working and living with a boyfriend. She does take medication. Our relationship is strained and I worry a lot about her future. I wonder if a more intensive program like AOT might have helped save her from several decades of suffering.

Please vote in favor of SB 453 to possibly help the sickest of those with mental illness.

Thank you.