

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 153 Medical Records - Fees - Attorneys Representing Patients

Health and Government Operation

Good afternoon:

My name is Jessica Ballantine. I suffer from Generalized Anxiety Disorder; ADD/ADHD; Bipolar 1; Depression; Borderline Personality Disorder; Slurred Speech; Premenstrual Dysphoric Disorder; Anorexia, Suicidal Ideation. Due to my mental disabilities, I am unable to leave my home at times and am extremely nervous interacting with people.

I filed my Social Security Disability case in November 2016. My lawyer helped me in getting my records and getting my case approved in November of 2023. It took almost 7 years for my case to be approved. I needed my lawyer to help me with the process of filing the appeals, requesting my records, and presenting the case to the Judge at the hearing as I was unable and unaware of how to do it myself. My lawyer requested my medical records from all my treatment sources. Scott London paid up front for my medical records as it was necessary to present evidence to prove my disability.

I don't think that I would have been able to manage the difficult process of obtaining medical records in a timely fashion without my lawyer's help due to not knowing which records to order, not having a fax machine to fax the request, or to upload requests via certain portals. I also was not able to afford to pay for the records due to limited income. The cost of these medical records exceeded \$200.00, and that cost has now been passed on to me as my out-of-pocket expense. It is not fair for me to pay for these medical records since I had been behind in paying my rent and needed every penny for my medicines and food. My lawyer helped me immensely by obtaining my medical records. I would not have been able to request my records from all the different treating sources without the help of my lawyer.

I favor and support this bill to waive the cost of medical records for Social Security applicants who are being helped by a lawyer to obtain the evidence to present at the hearing. People suffering from physical and mental disabilities, who have limited mobility, limited or no resources, unable to navigate the cumbersome and difficult process of obtaining their own medical records, need a lawyer's help with the process. My lawyer helped me with every step of the case from the beginning to the end and obtained all the necessary evidence to prove my disability. Medical records should be free of charge for the lawyers who help clients with their Social Security disability cases.

Thank you.



Jessica Ballantine
13304 Rising Sun Lane
Germantown, MD 20874
240-678-7832