

Testimony on Senate Hill 707-Favorable
SB707- Mental Health-Danger to Life and Safety of the Individual or Others-Definition
(Right to Treatment)

Health Committee

March 27, 2026

Dear Honorable Chair Bagnall, Vice Chair Cullison, and Members of the Committee,

As a family member of a person living with mental illness and a member of NAMI Howard County, I am offering favorable testimony in support of **SB 707- Mental Health-Danger to Life and Safety of the Individual or Others-Definition (Right to Treatment) as amended.**

Maryland is failing its citizens with severe mental illness and their families. People with untreated mental illness fill our jails, live on our streets, cycle in and out of hospitals, and often are victims of violent crime. Passing SB707 can improve this dismal scenario.

SB707 strengthens the ability of providers and families to intervene earlier and more effectively to help prevent crises and protect individuals with severe mental illness (SMI) and their communities. This bill ensures "danger" covers situations where a person with a severe mental illness (SMI) faces a substantial risk of causing harm to themselves and others and is unable to care for their own personal needs.

I teach NAMI's Family to Family class. Many participants tell the same story: their child/spouse/sibling cannot get care because they aren't deemed "sick enough" even though they refuse to eat, shower, or change their clothes, cannot work or communicate with people, hear threatening voices, and in bouts of mania, go days without sleeping, run up huge credit card debts, and smash holes in living room walls.

SB 707 is a practical, compassionate step that will lead to early treatment, better outcomes, reduce suffering, incarceration and homelessness, and strengthen public safety.

Please give a favorable report to SB707 as amended in the Senate, without changes. Passing SB707 out of Committee and expanding the definition of danger will be a lifeline for those affected by severe mental illness. I urge you to support SB707.

Laurie Liskin

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