

Testimony of Daniel R. Williamson, Jr. Regarding Bill No. 261 for PH on March 3, 2014

March 2, 2014

Connecticut General Assembly
Joint Committee on the Judiciary

I, Daniel R. Williamson, Jr., a resident of the State of Illinois, hereby submit this written testimony in support of Raised Bill No. 261, LCO No. 1653. AN ACT CONCERNING THE INHERITANCE RIGHTS OF A BENEFICIARY OR SURVIVOR WHO IS FOUND NOT GUILTY OF MURDER OR MANSLAUGHTER (ACQUITTED FOLLOWING GUILTY VERDICT) OF THE DECEASED BY REASON OF MENTAL DISEASE OR DEFECT.

I am the eldest brother of our late sister Heather Ann Williamson (Messenger), and I am grateful to have the opportunity to submit my comments for your consideration on the proposed Raised Bill and what I believe its successful passage will mean for many other (unfortunate) Connecticut residents in the future. On behalf of our Family, we believe that our experience over the last 16 years and the continual succession and accumulation of the bizarre and unbelievable circumstances of Heather's death and the ensuing legal tribulations have contributed to the Raised Bill referenced above. This Bill will right a fundamental flaw in the current State Statutes, and will address a situation that still exists in only very few remaining States in this Country.

We are grateful for the opportunity in May 2013 to publically present our Family's support of the Bill in the State Capital at the request of State Senator Tony Guglielmo and State Senator John Kissel. These Senators agree that there is a fundamental flaw in the State Statutes that provides for the financial gain by an individual from the act of that individual committing horrid crimes resulting in the death of another related individual. They have been supportive of the efforts to get this Bill in front of the General Assembly for action. We applaud them for their efforts and support of this important legal correction. The basic concept of receiving spoils from one's own criminal acts against a relative, or others for that matter, is a basic tenement of justice that is almost universally prohibited in civilized societies. Passage of this Bill will eliminate the future shock that an individual or Family would otherwise endure after the grief of losing a beloved relative by the hand of another 'family member'.

The situation regarding Dear Heather's death has been widely reported and discussed over the past 16 years, as have the self centered and convoluted efforts by the killer seeking his freedom, in part because as he testified in an early Psychiatric Security Review Board hearing he 'forgave himself for what he did'. In December of 2013, the Discovery Channel produced and broadcasted a feature episode on the Discovery ID program portraying the circumstances of Heather's killing and the ensuing legal manipulations that the killer continues to employ to try and 'get away with it'. Our Family supported this production and actively participated in working to get the facts

presented to the public with the primary goal to help at least one person realize that they or a loved one are indeed at risk and to immediately seek safety. We sincerely hope that this program also provided public awareness and renewed legislative momentum to get the Raised Bill to the forefront of the docket for passage.

We know that Heather's estate received a significant payment from the Homeowner's Insurance Policy due to her 'accidental death' in the home. Under current Connecticut law, Heather's entire estate including these proceeds paid in exchange for her death, passed to the killer, David Ivan Messenger. These proceeds, in addition to other assets owned both jointly and separately by Heather, were part of the financial resources used by the killer to continually pursue his freedom, in conflict with the Connecticut court ordered confinement for no less than 20 years.

We the Family of Heather, the real unfortunate victim in this sordid and bizarre affair, advocate, pray, and beseech the General Assembly to pass this Bill to improve the legal standing for future unfortunate citizens that are found in such an incomprehensible situation. Please pass Raised Bill No. 261, LCO No. 1653. **AN ACT CONCERNING THE INHERITANCE RIGHTS OF A BENEFICIARY OR SURVIVOR WHO IS FOUND NOT GUILTY OF MURDER OR MANSLAUGHTER OF THE DECEASED BY REASON OF MENTAL DISEASE OR DEFECT.** Failure to pass the Bill will be an insult to the citizens of Connecticut and for our Late Sister Heater.

Thank you for your consideration, support, and passage of this Bill.

With sincere respect,

Daniel R. Williamson, Jr.

Wheaton, IL