Carroll, Rhonda

From: Katherine Siekiera <kpsiekiera@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, March 18, 2016 12:09 AM
To: JudTestimony
Subject: Testimony for raised bill #5531

Raised Bill # 5531 AN ACT CONCERNING THE CARE AND TREATMENT OF PERSONS WITH A MENTAL ILLNESS OR SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER

Judiciary Committee Members:

My name is Katherine Siekiera and I am opposed to Bill #5531.

I do not believe that a person who is seeking recovery from addiction should be forced to take a medication against their will when that medication may or may not help them to recover from their addiction. If a person is given a medication that is used to "treat addiction" it does not actually make the person stop using. To stop using, a person with substance use disorder has to decide to stop. Without that decision recovery from that addiction is not possible.

It is my interpretation of this bill to be talking of two very separate issues, mental health and addiction, although the two could appear in the same diagnoses. In the instance of mental health, a patient may have some type of psychosis that may affect their capabilities in decision making, a person with substance use disorder does not. In the issue of mental health there are prescribed medications that are used to work with chemical imbalances to lessen symptoms and thereby help the condition. Whereas, with substance use disorder there are medications such as Methadone, Suboxone, Naltrexone, Campral, and Antabuse. These medications are useful tools for some but are not required or needed in **many** who have sought and found recovery from their addictions. Thereby discrediting medication as being the only way to remain addiction free. There are many who believe that a person is not actually free from their addiction if taking other addictive medications as a means to recover and if forced to take a medication against their will, I feel it would be more damaging to that person then good. Many believe that other addictive medications are merely substituting one drug for another and not changing or addressing the behaviors which cause the addiction. It should be left up to the person seeking recovery from addiction to choose which pathway of recovery will be most effective for them.

All substance use disorder individuals could qualify under this term, "Direct threat of harm", as abusing a drug is very harmful to themselves. Unfortunately there is no medication that is going to stop addiction. Medication may be useful tools but it is not the answer to stop drug abuse or is it a cure to drug addiction. Under this Bill's definition "direct treat of harm" thereby qualifying all substance use disorder individuals, it would cost a great amount of money to fund the transportation for this involuntary medication and to fund the new positions of "conservators" to care for them. This Bill adds cost to an already overburdened system.

It has been my experience as a person involved with the addiction recovery community for the past eight years that recovery from addiction relies on the person's decision to stop using drugs and their willingness to take the actions that lead to change, in thinking and behaviors, which will help them to remain that way. Addiction can be overcome through change and that does not come in a medication.

Thank you for your consideration,

Katherine Siekiera