

Written Testimony In regards S.B. No. 213 (Raised) An Act Concerning the Inheritance Rights of a Beneficiary or Survivor who is Found Not Guilty of Murder or Manslaughter by Reason of Mental Disease or Defect.

Respectfully submitted by:
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February 26, 2016

HONORABLE MEMBERS OF THE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE, SENATORS,
REPRESENTATIVES, and OTHERS,

I, Daniel R. Williamson, Jr., a resident of the State of Illinois, hereby submit this written testimony in support of Raised Senate Bill No. 261, 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 myself and our Family, we believe that our experiences over the last 18 years and the continual succession and accumulation of the bizarre and unbelievable circumstances of Heather's death and the ensuing legal tribulations both within the PSRB and the court system have contributed to the Raised Bill referenced above. Championed as well by our counsel Mr. John Klar, Esq., formerly of Chaplin, CT, we have supported this Bill for the past several years, and also addressed an audience here in 2013. This Bill will right a fundamental flaw in the current State Statutes, and will address a situation that exists in only a few remaining States in this Country.

I am pleased for this opportunity to submit this written testimony to further document our support of the Raised Bill No. 261, introduced by Representative Doug Dubitsky. We also were grateful for the past 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 lawmakers all agree that there is a fundamental flaw in the State Statutes that still provides for the financial gain by an individual from an action of that individual committing horrid crimes resulting in the death of a related individual, in our Sister's case the spouse of the killer. 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 Heather's death has been widely reported and discussed over the past 18 years, as have the self centered and convoluted efforts by the killer seeking his freedom, in part because as he testified in an early PSRB hearing he 'forgave himself for what he did'. We do not forgive him 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 in the community realize that they or a loved one may indeed be at risk and to immediately seek safety. We sincerely hope that this Discovery ID program also provided public awareness of the issue 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 at Whiting for no less than 20 years.

We, Heather's family, on behalf of Heather, the most 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 and family members of the State of Connecticut, that may be found in such an incomprehensible situation. Please pass Raised Senate Bill No. 261; it is our understanding that the Bill has had a couple of near passes, only to be stalled at the end. Please do not let this happen again. Failure to pass this Bill will be an insult to the citizens of Connecticut and to our Late Sister Heather.

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

With sincere respect,



Daniel R. Williamson, Jr.
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