

I am writing once again as an individual seeking whatever help I can regarding a much needed law change regarding Assisted Out-Patient Treatment (AOT) for persons with a diagnosis of mental illness in Ct. In light of the recent Newtown tragedy, and my struggle for the past 12 years with a son diagnosed with schizophrenia, I am requesting for more politicians to become more actively involved in researching with individual families to find out how they can help. Over a year ago, in late 2011, I wrote to Senator Leonard Fasano requesting him to open this issue at hearings, for possible law change in Connecticut in 2012. That was after reading Kendra Webdale's summary on-line. Quote from that summary: "Assisted outpatient treatment can save both the lives of people like my daughter and the lives of those imprisoned by brain disease. It is making a difference."

Unfortunately it is making a difference in all but six states, Connecticut being one in the minority.

Then, in Dec. 2012, a tragedy occurs in Sandy Hook, Connecticut. Although we will never know all the facts which caused Adam Lanza to do such a horrific crime against such innocent, beautiful human beings, mental illness was discussed as being a part of his life and his mother's life before his evil act. It happened here in this state of Connecticut. How shameful. Safety in our schools, gun law changes, and mental illness law changes need to be addressed. For Adam Lanza, it was the "Perfect Storm". Not just the fact of his ability to obtain these weapons so freely, but what was going on in his sick mind probably for months, even years that caused his action. Maybe, just maybe, his mother had tried reaching out for assistance at one point or another for help, either medically or legally, only to be stopped, once finding out the laws here in Connecticut protect the mentally ill person's so called rights. Their rights are protected, yet their health becomes compromised. Everyone is a unique, individual and should be looked at as such. Some do have what I think of as a "Beautiful Mind", yet inability to use it without the assistance of medications they are so unwilling to take. It's now time for the lawmakers of this state to try to learn and understand more about the mental health issues plaguing our community and make change so as to get Connecticut on track and never allow this type of tragedy to happen again. How can our state's legal system explain another such occurrence? The risk is so much greater if we do not move now to change this law.

I am a court appointed conservator, therefore should be able to make the rational decision with the recommendation of the psychiatrist to enforce medication. Due to the crazy, liberal law here in Ct. that some feel is best, my son and my family suffers and has suffered for the past 12 years. I'm sure others have similar situations. In the hospital the law states he must take his medication. They get him back out of the psychotic state of mind, the delusions go away, his paranoia/fear goes away and he then goes home to a relatively somewhat normal life, even capable now of part time employment. Each time, he then stops his medications, because in his mind he does not need medication. We then wait months to watch him slowly deteriorate, get so delusional and fearful from his paranoia and finally get him back to the hospital. A vicious cycle that damages his brain further each time this happens. One that could be eliminated if the law here in Ct. was different. Ct. Legal Rights does not help my son, although he believes they do. He says all the time "I don't need medication, I didn't do anything wrong". Its not a question of doing anything wrong, it's a horrific illness of the mind that he does not understand. If the law stated he needed to continue on his medication because of his doctor's and family's advice/recommendation, he would probably do so knowing it was the LAW. How do we understand what goes through their minds? We can't. That is the illness! However, we can try to fix things. I am requesting more

interest and involvement in mental health issues, something I never knew anything about until it hit my family and I have run into such legal obstacles. Please look into passing the Assisted Out-Patient Treatment law in Connecticut.

Thank you,

Barbara Gerbe