

Rebecca Edens
Tillamook, Oregon

March 18, 2019

RE: Testimony in Opposition regarding SB762 & SB763

Dear Chair Sen. Floyd Prozanski, Vice Chair Kim Thatcher, and Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee:

Good morning my name is Rebecca Edens and I reside in Tillamook, Oregon. I serve as President of the Oregon Mental Health Consumer and Psychiatric Survivor Coalition. I am a former state employee who worked at the Oregon State Hospital a Recovery Specialist and Advocate. Through the years, I have served on numerous advisory boards and task forces, advocating for positive change in Oregon's service delivery system. As a private citizen and professional, I have sat with literally multiples of 100's of Oregonians through their human distress directly related to their experiences as service users and professionals who even as I testify are being traumatized and marginalized right now for speaking up regarding abuse and neglect in a fractured system of care.

I am a native Oregonian and American citizen, a Human Being, Labeled by the Government in Violation of My Civil Rights as "Being" not just "Having" Mental Illness. I thought I had certain and inalienable rights to life and liberty. I found out that was not true – not for my Native American ancestors who were enslaved and killed, not for people of color, not for people who are gay, lesbian, and/or transgender, not for people with disabilities. Many have worked diligently for social justice to right those wrongs.

Of course we will never all agree with each other's points of views or what we should do to fix society or this Broken system of so called "care" but we can start by telling the truth. We must passionately – with one Voice – UNITE around one thing, and that is basic human rights. Especially Oregonians! I am here to bear witness. We are a People Group: the "psychiatrically labeled" who have had our rights violated for decades. We span all ages. We are every color and race. We have self-determined identities. We are the people that society and the system have labeled "Being Mental Illness" whose rights are, and have been, violated. I am here to bear witness to our collective suffering, involuntary treatment, coerced voluntary treatment, forced and coerced drugging, physical and chemical restraint, and this only begins a long list of what we experience as torture because these procedures humiliate, debilitate, injure, incapacitate and kill people. You cannot pass laws that are unconstitutional and violate our rights.

Do your duty as our representatives to uphold our civil rights, our human rights and yes, our cognitive liberty. Your job in fact is to not put into statute what would further endanger those Basic Human Rights we must passionately uphold not just for Oregonians but because we are Oregonians it is what we do!!

This statute will not fix the broken behavioral health delivery system. It will not address the social determinants of health. It's very language, "intercept" – How can you intercept any human being, lock them in a hospital against their will, impose on them significant human rights violations and expect them to recover- it is impossible it , in fact only multiplies suffering and trauma . Until you have heard from the people who have been "intercepted" – You have not heard from your constituents. How can you, in good conscience, move these bills, SB762 and SB763, forward unless you believe that we are in fact not human beings and citizens of Oregon, but wild beasts who need to be caged?

Signed,

Rebecca Edens

Rebecca Edens, BA
Psychiatric Survivor