

**March 18, 2019**

**Nicholas Wells**  
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**RE SB 763**

Chair Senator Prozanski  
Vice Chair Senator Thatcher  
Senator Bentz  
Senator Fagan  
Senator Gelser

Senator Linthicum  
Senator Manning

I am a human being. I am my own individual. I deserve to be treated as such. Once we are diagnosed with a mental illness it seems like that stops. The system is broken. I feel like I am a dollar amount and not a person. The mental health system is traumatizing and institutionalizes folks. We have no rights. Medications are forced on us with horrible side effects. It seems like the use of meds are a punishment. It diminishes our quality of life. When I have spoken up about side effects, I continued to be forced to take meds, and was punished in other ways when I spoke up.

When I say we are forced to take meds, I mean some of us are legally forced through a hearing, however many more of us are coerced and threatened with more time locked up unless we take them. Even when we experience side effects and develop new health problems because of the meds.

I know there are very real public safety concerns, but it seems to take years and years and we suffer. It seems like we don't matter and are sacrificed for the greater good. These drugs are as serious as any street drug, such as heroin or meth. I see a lot of caring staff here, and don't want to get them in trouble, but I see people under civil commitment here at OSH who are not adequately clothed. I see staff who seem more concerned about controlling behavior rather than people's happiness. Staff have to follow the directions of the Doctors. Doctors have so much power and could do so much good – but too often it doesn't work that way.

I do not support SB 763. It seems to be a big step backwards. More people will be institutionalized. How far back do they want to go? I worry it will go back to lobotomies and castrations. Where does it stop?

I would encourage the legislature to explore solutions that support talking with people and trying to get to know and understand them before you start messing with their minds, bodies, and lives. The first steps need to be more humane. Respect the individual, be kinder, be compassionate and seek to understand. These efforts need to come sooner.