

Submitter: Ron Unger
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Judiciary
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2467

I am a licensed clinical social worker specializing in the treatment of psychosis., and I have taught many continuing education seminars on therapy for psychosis and on the intersection of trauma and psychosis. I am testifying to draw attention to the relationship between trauma caused by forced mental health treatment and the worsening of mental health problems over time, and the resulting barriers to effective treatment that are created.

Those who advocate for looser standards for forced treatment fail to account for the detrimental impact that such treatment often has in the longer term. Someone may be forced into hospital and forced onto medications that temporarily reduce symptoms, but then have more symptoms in the longer term due to PTSD caused by the trauma of the forced treatment. Further, they are then likely to be apprehensive about engaging with professionals for fear of even more forced treatment, resulting in worse outcomes over time.

One example of an article that reviews some of these risks is "Investigating the impact of involuntary psychiatric hospitalization on youth and young adult trust and help-seeking in pathways to care"

<https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC10105343/>

In the long term, effective mental health treatment requires a friendly collaboration between treatment providers and the people receiving treatment. There is sometimes, in extreme situations, a place for forced treatment, but those situations are already addressed under current laws (and even under current laws force is often overused.)

Any money that might be spent on increased forced treatment might better be spent on making friendly and collaborative care more available to those most in need. That will improve outcomes without violating anyone's rights, without traumatizing people, and without making them fear further engagement with the mental health system.

I encourage you to oppose HB2467. Thank you for your consideration.