

Submitter: Jeff Rott
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Judiciary
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2467

My name is Jeff Rott, and for the last ten years my wife and I have been trying to navigate Oregon's mental health laws to keep our son alive. He has survived only because he impulsively left the state during a psychotic crisis.

Five years ago an Oregon hospital discharged him while still deep in the grips of psychosis. We were visiting daily and had open communication with hospital staff. Everyone knew he was lost in delusions and hallucinations, but staff determined all at once that he was no longer dangerous. They discharged him with nothing but a bus pass and no notification to our family.

Within hours he boarded a plane to New York, still in full-blown psychosis. By some miracle, he did not respond to the voices, paranoia, intrusive thoughts, and fear of persecution in a way that could have put his life and the lives of others on that flight at risk.

After landing, my son was alone and lost in New York City, driven by delusions. But unlike Oregon, which abandoned him, New York City acted. Law enforcement found him and took him to a hospital, where he remained for two months. I flew out and visited him every day, watching his symptoms persist until anti-psychotic medication finally flipped the switch. With the right treatment, my son was back.

Although his impulsive, psychosis-driven trip to New York was extremely risky, my son's chances for survival in Oregon were profoundly worse. Oregon's system throws up barriers no family can overcome. With advanced degrees and resources, my wife and I were blocked at every turn from getting the help our son needed to save his life and restore him to sanity.

Anyone in deep psychosis has the potential to harm themselves or others. We have no idea what thoughts and delusions are running through their heads as their brains create an alternate reality that none of us can see. We now have guardianship of our son and when we ask him what he wants us to do should he fall into psychosis, his answer is quite simple: "Help me."

Harm is required—not prevented—by Oregon's current laws. Please pass this legislation to make access to treatment more reasonable and prevent avoidable crises and deaths in families like mine.