

Submitter: Kim Audora

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Judiciary

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2467

My name is Kimberly Audova. My son's first psychotic break led him to sit in the dark in his bedroom with a knife. I was terrified and had no idea what was happening. He said aliens had put cameras in his eyes, that they were watching and would tell him what to do next.

When we called 911, law enforcement explained that there was nothing illegal about being mentally ill or psychotic. They told us there was nothing anyone could do. He ended up living on the streets and his illness was allowed to worsen so that now he lives with a worse prognosis for life. He's 25.

Of course early intervention was what he needed then, but it took many psychotic episodes before we learned in all the hardest ways possible how to help him. I'm now his legal guardian, which makes it slightly more possible to help him access inpatient care when his symptoms worsen.

He's been hospitalized 28 times, and only a few of those hospitalizations have been long enough to make any change in his condition. The short-term catch-and-release system has led him many times toward near death. He has stolen cars and disappeared while manic. He has lain down in the middle of a highway in an attempt to die. He once drove a car into a cement wall. It's only because of my advocacy as his guardian that he has not been criminalized for behaviors related to psychotic episodes that went on way too long.

It's only through sheer happenstance that Christian is still alive. He's doing okay right now but is frustrated that his record of mental illness and ongoing struggles to maintain stability have made it impossible for him to work.

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.