

My name is Valerie Geer, and I am the legal guardian of my 44-year-old brother, who has lived in Oregon since 2017, and has a 25-year history of schizoaffective disorder and refusing treatment due to anosognosia, a common symptom of a psychotic disorder.

If I were to write a book about my brother's experiences in Oregon's mental health system, it would be called *Naked and Tazed: What Happens When a Broken Mental Health System Fails Our Most Vulnerable*. That's exactly what happened to my brother after my civil commitment plea was denied. His symptoms resulted in him being naked in the middle of the road in the pouring rain in a psychotic rage while police showed up, chased him down, and tazed him when he tried to flee to safety in his own backyard.

Over the years, I have filed civil commitment papers numerous times to try and get help. Allow me to spell out exactly what kind of behaviors I'm talking about:

- Starting bonfires inside his home
- Urinating and defecating on himself and inappropriate places
- Leaving food out, having it rot, and eating that food
- Bringing dead animal carcasses (roadkill) into his home
- Threatening to rape and kill people, including his neighbors, at the top of his lungs, at all hours of the day and night
- Destroying property in fits of violent rage
- Kicking a mental health staff member
- Assaulting a family member
- Trespassing
- Threatening suicide
- Plucking out all his body hair, resulting in scabs, which he picks, resulting in bloody, open wounds all over his body, leading to infection and, one time, scabies

Not only was civil commitment not granted, but my brother did not even get to go before a judge to have a judge decide. Instead, the civil commitment investigators made the decision that he didn't meet the criteria to be committed. This is where homelessness and jail have become part of my brother's mental health journey in Oregon. We should not have to cry loudly for help only to be ignored and have our loved one commit a crime or become the victim of a crime in order to get that help. We desperately need the civil commitment standards to be changed so that our most vulnerable can be protected when they are not able to protect themselves. Please pass this important legislation, HB 2467. Thank you.