

Submitter: Hunter Graham  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: House Committee On Judiciary  
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2467

I'm Hunter Graham. My son Austin is in Oregon State Hospital on a life sentence after being found Guilty Except for Insanity. You should not have to kill your mom to get mental health treatment, but that is what our bright, promising son did during a psychotic episode a year and a half ago to his mom, my beautiful wife Teresa.

For months leading up to Teresa's death, my son decompensated in plain sight. He was disconnected from reality, could not organize himself to stay safe, and was profoundly paranoid and disoriented. Still, authorities and providers explained that no one could help unless he was imminently dangerous.

Teresa and I have advanced degrees in medicine and law. We were determined, devoted parents desperately trying to save our son. As his mental health deteriorated over several years, we sought individual and family counseling. When his symptoms worsened to include psychosis, we made multiple calls to the mobile mental health crisis response team and the behavioral health unit of the Portland Police. These response teams have excellent, knowledgeable, caring staff that sincerely wanted to help, but their hands were tied by our laws requiring imminent harm.

As we became more desperate, Teresa and I went through the difficult, expensive process of applying for guardianship, which helped us advocate for a brief hospitalization. During that inpatient stay, Austin said he didn't want treatment so the hospital provided none.

Our son was discharged back into our care still experiencing psychosis, unwilling to discuss treatment for an illness he was convinced he didn't have. At the time I didn't know there's a name for this symptom. It's called anosognosia. Providers did not treat Austin despite the fact that he was incapable of exercising choice because of this symptom, which is common with psychosis.

In killing his mom, Austin finally met criteria for the mental healthcare he so desperately needed. At Oregon State Hospital, he is improving only to realize what happened. He now has to live the rest of his life knowing what his untreated mental illness caused.

The judge declared my son guilty except for insanity because he recognized that Austin did not act from choice. His brain was misleading him to think his own mother was poisoning him and directing him to do things he never would have done with treatment. Denial of that treatment led to my wife's death and a tragedy that will

forever haunt our family.

This bill nudges the state in the right direction by at least defining dangerousness and recognizing that severe psychiatric deterioration can render someone dangerous into the near future, even if they aren't immediately in the act of killing themselves or someone else.

Please pass this legislation to make access to treatment more reasonable and prevent avoidable tragedies and deaths in families like mine. Thank you.