

Submitter: Asta Chastain  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: House Committee On Judiciary  
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2467

Dear Chair Kropf, Vice-Chair Chotzen, Vice Chair Wallan, and members of the committee:

My name is Asta Chastain and I am a person with lived experience being civilly committed in Multnomah County Oregon, August of 2020. I also got the chance to speak in person at the hearing on 4/3 (thank you!). This written portion of my testimony is meant to supplement that with some points I did not get the chance to share.

Before my 2020 civil commitment, I had spent over 5 years searching out and actively engaging in mental health care. This was an incredibly challenging process primarily due to the extreme lack in available treatment options overall and even fewer that accepted Medicaid, as well as long waitlists, frequent staff turnover rates and services abruptly shutting down. However, I was lucky in many ways and did participate in life changing services such as Portland Dialectical Behavioral Therapy Institute (DBTI) which led to me to a connected life with stable housing, community involvement, greatly improved well being, productivity and self sufficiency!

I was in long term stable housing and remained in ongoing maintenance therapy, regularly attending appointments when I was civil committed in 2020.

The experience was traumatic to say the least. The word of the law as written along with the stated I patient rights were very different than what occurred in practice. Many steps of the process were omitted and not followed and my stated rights were just that- stated on paper, not followed in practice. Here are a few examples of my experience:

- \* boarded at ER with no windows, in seclusion, and at times denied access to drinking water
- \* Did NOT have access to representation until the morning of my hearing due to refusal of my access to a phone
- \* The hearing with Judge was via telephone call with poor connection in the noisy ER

The hearing resulted in my being civilly committed. It was over 20 days into my commitment before I first got a chance to be outdoors at all. I was also severed from the outside mental health treatment I had while under civil commitment. I nearly also lost my housing because I had no way of accessing my bank account in order to pay for rent.

To this day, I still experience life long implications from being civil committed. There

is also no opportunity to expunge a civil commitment from one's record in Oregon.

I urge you to consider the financial expense of civil commitment as well as long term impacts when deciding on this bill. I feel it's most important to fund expanded VOLUNTARY services instead of expanding civil commitment.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,  
Asta Chastain