

Submitter:

Rhea Wolf

On Behalf Of:

Committee:

House Committee On Judiciary

Measure, Appointment or Topic:

HB4106

Yet again we see people with mental health challenges (psychiatric issues) - or the perception of such issues -being treated as sub-citizens. It is truly shocking how over and over again, those of us who experience mental health challenges have to fight for our basic rights. This bill means that one class of citizens (those who have a mental health diagnosis or are judged as such by others) will lose their constitutional rights to be free from state violence and excessive use of force, and to have avenues to address those grievances of violent, illegal treatment. That legislators would support such a law protecting law enforcement from being held accountable for illegal, unwarranted, or excessive force based solely on mental health diagnosis is dangerous. We know what happens when law enforcement is called out to mental health calls. People die. People with mental health issues are 16 times more likely to be killed by police officers than the general public. Nearly half of all individuals killed by the police have mental health conditions. Additionally, this affects certain groups disproportionately, such as people who are Black or Queer (LGBTQIA+). Removing any accountability for police when responding to people experiencing mental health issues will continue to create situations in which people are subjected to violence and even death, while police are given impunity when such events occur. I urge to you oppose this bill and keep legal protections in place that should be afforded to all citizens regardless of psychiatric diagnosis or the perception of a psychiatric issue. People like me deserve the same rights and equal protection under the law.