



February 8, 2024

House Committee on Corrections and Juvenile Justice

Prepared and Presented by:

Susan Wallace, Member of NAMI Topeka, and lifelong KS resident

House Committee Chair, Representative Stephen Owens, Vice Chair Representative Eric L Smith, and Ranking Minority Member, Representative John Carmichael, thank you for this opportunity to submit written testimony concerning **HB 2353**.

My name is Susan Wallace, and I am writing to seek your support for **HB 2353**, a bill that allows for the extension of the duration of treatment for individuals and introduces new guidelines for determining the need for continued treatment under the care and treatment act for mentally ill individuals. Moreover, it allows for the option of court-ordered outpatient treatment instead of inpatient treatment, provided certain criteria are met. This bill promotes treatment in a less restrictive setting when suitable and necessary.

My son has a serious mental health condition and has been repeatedly incarcerated due to symptoms of his illness. Assisted outpatient treatment would give him and others like him an opportunity to receive the treatments they need in the community rather than hospitalization or incarceration.

AOT aims to motivate and assist individuals to engage in treatment, which leads to a reduction in the likelihood of repeat hospitalization and criminal justice involvement. AOT is a tool that allows civil courts, mental health centers, and community organizations such as NAMI to work collaboratively to help individuals with serious mental illness. AOT recognizes that mental illness is not a crime and recognizes that additional support is sometimes necessary for recovery.

Your support for this beneficial bill is greatly appreciated!

Thank you for your time,

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