

February 22, 2019

Senator Gene Sullentrop, Chair  
Senate Public Health and Welfare Committee

Re: SB 93 Proponent

Chair Sullentrop and Committee Members:

For seven years I could not tell reality from imagination. I also lacked all insight into my mental illness. This wasn't denial, it was a condition called anosognosia. I absolutely did not believe I was sick, I unequivocally believed my delusions. I thought there were cameras watching me everywhere; I believed I was running the CIA; I was sure everyone with a phone was a spy. I lost my marriage, my career as a documentary film director and, obviously, my sanity. Nothing saved me. Not my degree from Stanford, not my Fulbright, not my supportive family. Mental illness doesn't discriminate. I was arrested for a nuisance crime and went to jail. I was hospitalized against my will six times for weeks at a time, but I refused to switch my medication, because I didn't have any knowledge that I was sick.

Finally, in 2015 I switched my medication and was delusion free in three days. To find out that everything I believed in for seven years was really symptoms of a mental illness, not the truth was as shocking as finding out aliens had invaded earth.

I have been delusion free for four years, I work part-time at a non-profit and am planning a wedding with a supportive, amazing man. Because of his income, when I get married, I will lose Medicaid. His insurance will cover me, but his insurance has a policy that before they will pay for my medication, I will first have to try a cheaper, older drug, with many scary possible side effects and health risks. If the medication does not work - and many medications do not work for me - I am sure I will immediately develop both delusions and anosognosia once again and will refuse treatment. I could lose another seven years of my life and end up costing the system much more money due to stays in psychiatric hospitals or even jail.

Please tell your legislators to support bills HB 2120 and SB-93. My life depends on it.

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