



National Alliance on Mental Illness

**nami** | **Kansas**

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**Senate Judiciary Committee**

Prepared and Presented by:

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Senate Committee on Judiciary Chair, Senator Kellie Warren, Vice Chair, Senator Rick Wilborn, Ranking Minority Member, Senator Etha Corson, and the full membership of Senate Committee on Judiciary, thank you for this opportunity to submit written testimony concerning **HB 2353**.

I am lifelong Kansan who is about to graduate with my MSW so that I can serve Kansans and our mental health needs. Currently, I work as the Resource Line Director for NAMI Kansas and have received hundreds of calls from families and individuals in crisis. As such, I have repeatedly witnessed individuals with severe mental health conditions, such as schizophrenia, being arrested and jailed due to incidents that were caused by their symptoms. Their loved ones are desperate for any help, as these individuals cannot get the treatment they need while incarcerated and are at a further disadvantage once they are released.

This unending cycle puts unnecessary strain on our state's resources. Untreated mental health conditions are incredibly disruptive and cause stress for not only the individuals and their families but for law enforcement, courts, jails and prisons, hospitals, and the community around them.

HB 2353 provides a solution. By supporting the extension of Assisted Outpatient Treatment (AOT) programs to more individuals across the state, we are able to get people the treatment they need. This treatment will help to reduce further conflict and lead Kansans to recovery so that they can live fulfilling lives and partake in their communities in new, healthy ways. It will keep individuals out of hospitals, out of jails, and off of the streets and foster the ability to work, create, and foster connections with others.

Please support HB 2353. Mental health affects all Kansans. Your support is immensely appreciated.

Thank you for your time,

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