

From: William H. Bruce II

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To: Members of Health and Human Services Committee, Sen. Joseph C. Brannigan, Sen. Lisa T. Marraché, Sen. Peter Mills, Rep. Anne C. Perry, Rep. Patricia Jones, Rep. Mark Eves, Rep. Matthew J. Peterson, Rep. Linda F. Sanborn, Rep. Peter C. Stuckey, Rep. Sarah O. Lewin, Rep. James J. Campbell, Sr., Rep. Henry L. Joy, Rep. Meredith N. Strang Burgess, Rep. Donald G. Soctomah

April 27, 2009

Dear Committee,

I'm writing you in support of LD1360. My name is William Bruce and I'm a patient at Riverview. I have been committed here for almost three years. I was committed because on June 20th of 2006 I killed my mother. I have been living in sorrow since.

Life has been very difficult for me at times but with the hospitals help and medication I get by. I would like to talk about the importance of medication in my life. Before the crime happened I was hospitalized but I refused medication. If I had been on medication and in an outpatient treatment program I would not be writing you this letter today. I struggle with this on a daily basis. At the time everything seemed clear to me. I was a clandestine operative and I believed my mother was an Al Qaeda operative and I was being ordered to kill her. I did not realize how distorted my mind was and how much the delusions had taken over. My dad tells me everyone could see there was something wrong with me but I couldn't. This is when I should have been treated.

After I arrived back at the hospital I was still refusing medication, this is when my father stepped in and became my guardian. The hospital told me I would have to start taking medication or they would force me to. So in late 2006 I started a medicine regime. I don't really know how to describe the change; all I can tell you is that the medicine worked well for me. It actually took a medicine change before I found one that worked the best for me. I'm currently on abilify. Waking up and realizing what I did, had a major effect on me at first and still does today.

Today I have a better grip on things thanks to Dr. Fischer and hours of treatment. Treatment is another important part of the medicine, without it you are running blind. The education you receive at the hospital is designed to work with the medication and help you understand your own illness. I'm not going to tell you I have had it easy because it hasn't been. It has actually been very difficult. It took me a long time to accept that I even had a mental illness but the longer I was on the medication the clearer things became. I know I will most likely have to take medication for the rest of my life. I have resigned myself to that fact but others haven't others who need the medication. It took a lot to get to this point today but I'm here and I will continue to go forward.

At the current point in time I'm allowed to go into the community a couple times a week with supervision. I also work grounds maintenance five days out of the week for two hours. I just recently got an associate degree after two years of hard work. You could say I keep myself very busy.

I'm writing you in support of LD1360 because I see firsthand what the benefits of medication are and what would happen if someone who is diagnosed with a mental illness and prescribed medication goes off of them. It is not healthy for the person taking them or the people around them. LD1360 will help keep people on their medication.

Sincerely,

William H. Bruce II