



April 6, 2022

Honorable Chairman Edward Gordon  
House Judiciary Committee  
Legislate Office Building Room 208  
North Main St  
Concord, NH 03301

RE: NAMI NH Support for SB 392

Dear Chairman and Committee Members:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. My name is Holly Stevens, and I am the Director of Public Policy at NAMI New Hampshire, the National Alliance on Mental Illness. NAMI NH is a non-profit, grassroots organization whose mission is to improve the lives of all people impacted by mental illness and suicide through support, education and advocacy. On behalf of NAMI NH, I am here today to speak in favor of SB 392, establishing a commission to study insanity and restoration of competency. First, NAMI NH would like to thank the sponsors for being included as a member of the commission created by the legislation.

New Hampshire currently lacks any formal restoration process or system to provide treatment for individuals who are found incompetent. The mental health court system isn't even an option because those programs require consent, which a person who is deemed incompetent cannot give. They also require an understanding of the criminal and judicial processes, which a person who is deemed incompetent does not have.

It is NAMI NH's experience in working with families, that the loved ones of a person who has been found incompetent to stand trial see these gaps in our system as opportunities that are lost. If competency has not been restored within a year, the criminal charges are dropped, whether or not the justice involved individual has sought or received treatment. NAMI NH has heard that many times these individuals go on to be homeless, become involved in other criminal behavior, or have any number of other negative life outcomes. Having more formal systems in place would allow for additional treatment opportunities that do not exist today.

SB 392 would establish a commission to study insanity and restoration of competency which would allow our state to explore various systems to figure out what is the best fit for New Hampshire. Therefore, NAMI NH urges the committee to vote ought to pass on this bill.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Holly A. Stevens". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Holly A. Stevens, Esq.