



February 7, 2023

Honorable Chairman Robert Lynn
House Judiciary Committee
Legislate Office Building Room 206
North Main St., Concord, NH 03301

RE: NAMI NH Support of SB 128

Dear Chairman Lynn 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 support of SB 128, relative to payment for legal services for persons involuntarily admitted for mental health services.

SB 128 ensures that the most vulnerable mental health patients receive appropriate legal representation for probable cause hearings held under the involuntary commitment statute. Individuals who are found to be a danger to themselves or others due to their mental condition are eligible for involuntary emergency admission (IEA) to a psychiatric facility. Since this is an involuntary commitment, the person is not seeking or asking for the services, and in fact, does not want the service. Many times, they may not be aware of the circumstances surrounding their illness. To be held against their will and then be hit with legal fees once stable and released from the hospital does not seem appropriate for those who cannot afford it.

SB 128 will go a long way in ensuring that people who are on an IEA are provided the legal representation they need and deserve to assist them in navigating the situation and the system without having to worry about a bill after the fact. Therefore, NAMI NH urges the committee to recommend SB 128 ought to pass.

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.

Find Help, Find Hope.

NAMI New Hampshire • 85 North State Street • Concord, NH 03301
InfoLine: 800-242-6264 • Tel. 603-225-5359 • Fax 603-228-8848 • info@naminh.org / www.NAMINH.org