

Hello, my name is Andrew Haynes, and I wanted to express my opposition to HB4088. I am a dedicated employee at UCP Connections and have been for nearly six years. Additionally, I live with epilepsy, which I have been managing since I was 16 years old. Unfortunately, I have experienced some challenging situations in public when having seizures, including instances of violence, robbery, and what can be described as inadvertent assault. Due to misconceptions about my condition, some people assume I am under the influence of drugs or experiencing withdrawal symptoms. These episodes can be quite distressing, as I have woken up disoriented in unfamiliar surroundings, sometimes feeling threatened. As a result, I have developed a strong instinct to protect myself during seizures or potential harm.

Allow me to share an incident that occurred at Portland Adventist Hospital in 2016 following a car accident. I have no recollection of the events that transpired between being in my sister's car and finding myself being restrained by unfamiliar individuals. In a state of fear, I instinctively fought back, causing harm to some of the nurses present. It was my sister, who understands my condition well, that informed the nurses to give me space and not touch me, as I typically exhibit such responses. Unfortunately, their professional judgment led them to disregard her advice, resulting in a distressing and regrettable situation.

I would like to emphasize the immense effort I have invested in acquiring my education, attending school despite the challenges posed by my seizures, and securing a well-paying job that has allowed me to no longer rely on social security benefits or food stamps. However, if this bill were to pass, and I were to have another seizure incident similar to the one in 2016, the consequences could be dire. I might face felony charges, lose my employment, and be compelled to rely on social security once again, making it exceedingly difficult to find reputable employment given the stigma surrounding individuals with criminal records. I would also be forced to reapply for food stamps and potentially abandon any aspirations of international travel due to this medical condition that I never asked for. In effect, I would find myself in a situation similar to that faced by many transgender individuals who face prosecution in certain states, eventually being compelled to leave behind my support system and job in order to avoid being convicted solely on the grounds of being an epileptic.

Thank you for taking the time to read my message.