

Submitter: Rhea Wolf

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB5006

I'll keep it brief - HB 2467 would have significant financial impact with few results. There is already a shortage of behavioral health care workers in the state, so one wonders who is going to care for the increased numbers of civilly committed folks? There is already a shortage of inpatient beds in the state, so one wonders where the increased numbers of civilly committed folks will be housed?

Please stop funding projects where the interventions come too late. We need more solutions upstream, not downstream, meaning that if we had better access to mental healthcare supports earlier on, more affordable housing, more peer support, drop-in centers, non-police crisis response, emotional wellness education in schools, we could mitigate some of the problems "downstream" and prevent serious mental health issues from developing.

There is ample evidence that a serious mental health diagnosis has more to do with your socioeconomic status than any other potential cause. We can prevent many of these situations if we just put the money in the right places. Forced treatment, involuntary commitment - these are short-term, expensive, band-aid approaches in most cases. This bill would do very little to actually help the person being committed in the long term. Our tax-payer money is better spent in a variety of other ways. Tragedies related to mental health challenges can be prevented, but this is not the way.

Sincerely,
Rhea Wolf