

Dear Members of the House Health Policy Standing Committee,

As a concerned Michigander, I implore you to reject Bill 2023-HIB-5114. Its provisions, allowing non-physician providers to conduct involuntary commitment assessments, pose a grave threat to individual liberty and open the door to deeply unjust practices.

Stripping Away Freedom Unjustly:

The mere possibility of being involuntarily committed to a psychiatric hospital against your will is a terrifying prospect. This power must be wielded with the utmost caution and reserved for the most severe and expertly diagnosed cases. Weakening the standards for involuntary admission means unjustly robbing individuals of their freedom and potentially doing irreversible damage to their lives.

Potential for Widespread Abuse:

Granting this authority to non-physician providers drastically expands the potential for abuse, both intentional and unintentional. Misdiagnosis, undue pressure from hospitals seeking financial benefit, and lack of specialized expertise could lead to people being wrongly imprisoned in psychiatric facilities. Reports like WXYZ-TV Detroit's "Trapped in a Psych Ward" expose the horrifying reality that safeguards in the current system are already being circumvented. This bill worsens the problem, not solves it.

Prioritizing Compassion and Alternatives:

Mental health struggles demand compassionate solutions, not those built on coercion. Instead of expanding the scope of involuntary commitment, let's invest in prevention, early intervention programs, and robust community-based mental healthcare. Support models that foster collaboration between physicians and non-physician providers, ensuring expertise informs every decision while maximizing access to care.

Upholding Human Rights:

The right to make decisions regarding your own body and mental health is a fundamental human right. This bill erodes that right, opening the door to devastating consequences for vulnerable individuals. I urge you to prioritize patient well-being and protect their autonomy.

Seeking Just Solutions:

We cannot address the mental health crisis by sacrificing individual liberties. Let's work towards humane, patient-centered solutions that truly meet the needs of our communities without compromising fundamental freedoms. Please, vote against this dangerous bill.

Thank you for your attention.

Sincerely,

Tony Leo

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