HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
COMPILATION OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Submitted to the Committee on County Affairs

For HB 1400

Compiled on: Wednesday, March 29, 2023 3:15 PM

Note: Comments received by the committee reflect only the view of the individual(s) submitting the comment, who retain sole responsibility for the content of the comment. Neither the committee nor the Texas House of Representatives takes a position on the views expressed in any comment. The committee compiles the comments received for informational purposes only and does not exercise any editorial control over comments.

Hearing Date: March 29, 2023 10:30 AM - or upon final adjourn./recess or bill referral if permission granted

Eric Kunish
National Alliance on Mental Illness
Austin, TX

I support this bill.

Lee Spiller
Citizens Commission on Human Rights-Texas
Austin, TX

Against HB1400
The Citizens Commission on Human Rights is a non-profit, mental health watchdog.

Over the past several legislative sessions, there have been what we see as significant attempts to erode the rights and fundamental liberties of Texans labeled with mental disorders. Some of this included legislation making it easier to use outpatient commitment, also known as “assisted outpatient treatment.”

This trend goes against a World Health Organization guidance on community mental health issued in June 2021. The W.H.O. pointed out that:

“The perceived need for coercion is built into mental health systems, including in professional education and training, and is reinforced through national mental health and other legislation. Coercive practices are pervasive and are increasingly used in services in countries around the world, despite the lack of evidence that they offer any benefits, and the significant evidence that they lead to physical and psychological harm and even death. People subjected to coercive practices report feelings of dehumanization, disempowerment, being disrespected and disengaged from decisions on issues affecting them. Many experience it as a form of trauma or re-traumatization leading to a worsening of their condition and increased experiences of distress. Coercive practices also significantly undermine people’s confidence and trust in mental health service staff, leading people to avoid seeking care and support as a result.”

We support patients’ rights to give informed consent, and the corollary to that is informed refusal. We oppose coercive practices, dehumanization, and disempowerment of patients.
This legislation points directly at patients who are not so dangerous as to need inpatient psychiatric hospitalization.

We oppose the expansion of Assisted Outpatient Treatment for the obvious reason that the main “assistance” seems to be force or coercion.

Lee Spiller, Executive Director
Citizens Commission on Human Rights-Texas