

Date of Hearing: 2/28/2023

Damian Wilk

District 14

**TESTIMONY ON SB480- POSITION: FAVORABLE**  
**Mental Health Law - Assisted Outpatient Treatment Programs**

**TO:** Chair Griffith, Vice Chair Klausmeier, and members of the Finance Committee

**FROM:** Damian Wilk

**OPENING: My name is Damian Wilk. I am a resident of District 14. I am submitting this testimony in support of SB480.**

My name is Damian Wilk. I am a longtime resident of Montgomery County. I am very familiar with the entire mental health system. While trying to assist my relatives, I have experienced multiple hospitals, emergency rooms, mental health facilities, and mental health professionals. I have also sought help from a crisis center, mobile crisis teams, police, and a residential rehabilitation program. I am also a volunteer with the National Alliance on Mental Illness – Montgomery County (NAMI-MC). I am an instructor for NAMI's Family to Family course. Pre-COVID, I was a volunteer with NAMI in the Lobby.

I had a son that persistently struggled to voluntarily adhere to mental health treatment. We tried a wide variety of methods to get him help. We were consistently told that unless he said he was suicidal, there was nothing they could do for him. Once I was able to have him agree to go to an emergency room for treatment. At the last moment, he did not go in, and had a friend pick him up. Due to his untreated mental illness, he died of suicide. If Senate Bill 480 had been in place, he would still be alive today.

I have another mentally ill relative that also persistently struggles to adhere to voluntarily treatment. Due to unsuccessful mental health treatment, he self-medicated and became drug addicted. Everything we have done to help him has failed and I believe he will die if he does not receive proper treatment. SB480 is our last hope for getting them treatment.

The current mental health system has failed both my relatives. The provisions of SB480 would make it possible for the mental health system to help those that cannot voluntarily adhere to mental health and drug treatment. Nothing can be done to help my relative that died by suicide, but my relative currently suffering from mental illness and drug addiction can be saved. He is smart, well educated, and caring. He has the potential to be a great asset to his community. **I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on SB480.**