



February 8, 2024

**House Committee on Corrections and Juvenile Justice**

Prepared and Presented by:  
Isaac Johnson, Resource Line Director, NAMI Kansas

House Committee Chair, Representative Stephen Owens, Vice Chair Representative Eric L Smith, Ranking Minority Member, Representative John Carmichael, and the full membership of House Committee on Corrections and Juvenile Justice, thank you for this opportunity to submit written testimony concerning **HB 2353**.

My name is Isaac Johnson, and I am writing in support of **HB 2353**.

I was born and raised in Kansas. Currently, I work within the mental health field to assist other Kansans with their mental health struggles. At NAMI Kansas, where I am the Resource Line Director, we receive thousands of calls, emails, and walk-ins every year looking for help related to their or a loved one's mental health journey. Unfortunately, it is a common occurrence to hear about individuals with serious mental health conditions, such as schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, or schizoaffective disorder, who are in and out of the justice system due to untreated mental health symptoms. Many of these individuals experience anosognosia, which means that they are unaware that they are experiencing mental health symptoms that are causing harm to themselves and/or others. Often, their symptoms, including anosognosia, means that these individuals rarely seek out treatment and face immense challenges, such as limited to no income and homelessness, with accessing it to begin with. Repeated legal problems only worsen these challenges.

However, Assisted Outpatient Treatment (AOT) programs are a significant resource that can create positive interventions in the lives of people involved with the justice system as a consequence of their mental health symptoms. **HB 2353** improves AOT programs by making community mental health services more available for those who need it. Mental health treatment not only better life by keeping people out of jails and hospitals and off the streets, but it saves them, as well.

Thank you for your time,

Isaac Johnson

1732 W 24<sup>th</sup> St C34  
Lawrence, Kansas 66046  
[isaac@namikansas.org](mailto:isaac@namikansas.org)