



Senate Transportation Committee

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Presented by:
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Executive Director

NAMI Kansas is the state organization of the National Alliance on Mental Illness, a grassroots organization whose members are individuals living with mental illnesses and their family members who provide care and support. NAMI Kansas provides programs of peer support and education by and for our members through a statewide network of local affiliates. We advocate for individuals who are living with mental illness to ensure their access to treatment and supportive services.

We support the intent of SB 74 to provide the opportunity for individuals with cognitive impairments to have the means to make their condition known to law enforcement officers through their driver's license and/or appropriate vehicle identification. Our support for the bill is premised on this being a completely voluntary option for individuals to disclose their condition.

Several years ago, the legislature made changes to Kansas statutes that provided law enforcement the right to know whether a person of interest is being treated at the Community Mental Health Center. This was an effort designed to provide officers with critical information to facilitate better outcomes in crisis situations involving individuals with serious mental illness when the identity of the person was known.

However, the tragic outcome involving Joey Weber would not have been averted based on that change to statute. SB 74 would provide an additional level of protection for individuals with a range of cognitive disorders including but not limited to mental illness, autism spectrum disorders, intellectual and developmental disabilities, and traumatic brain injury.

This would be a welcome change to statute that will provide useful information to law enforcement, especially for officers in the expanding Crisis Intervention Teams (CIT) across the state. Thank you for your consideration of this measure.