

Proponent Testimony on House Bill 61
Senate Judiciary Committee
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Greetings, Chairman Eklund, Vice Chair Manning, Ranking Member Thomas, and members of the committee. Thank you for the chance to provide proponent testimony on House Bill 61. I would also like to thank Representatives Lanese and Liston for their advocacy in this matter.

My name is Emily Holley. I am a licensed independent social worker and a Probate Pre-screener at Netcare Access. My job is to evaluate mentally ill residents of Franklin County. If these individuals are meeting the criteria of imminent risk of harm to self or others, I submit an affidavit to the Probate Court asking that the individual's right to refuse treatment be temporarily suspended and a probate order of detention be issued so the individual can receive psychiatric evaluation. My full name and professional licensure go on this paperwork and a copy is provided to the client. The choice I make to pursue a probate order is understandably not a choice most of my clients agree with. While not all of the clients I work with have a history of violence, some do. Some have made attempts to or have succeeded in seriously harming community members or other mental health professionals. Some clients have co-occurring substance abuse disorders or personality disorders that can result in further impaired judgment and increased impulsivity. I take many steps to protect myself in the community when working with my clients but do not feel that this level of caution should have to extend to my home life.

My concern is the overwhelming availability of my personal information via public data mining websites. A few months ago, my co-workers and I ran our names through several popular data mining sites. Most of these websites were able to attach my birth date, home address, and family members to my profile. Any of my clients can access this information with a basic internet connection. The vast number of these sites makes it nearly impossible to keep up with checking for and removing my data. I have requested my information be removed from no less than 15 of these sites but as long as this information is considered public record, these sites will repopulate my data no matter how many times I request it be removed. I understand there are certain risks inherent to the position; what I don't understand, is why my personal information is allowed to be such low-hanging fruit for any disgruntled client.

To provide a real-life example of the concerns I face in this job: last year, I submitted a probate affidavit for a client who was stalking young women in the community. The client also had a known history of violence when he was not compliant with medications. I was able to take certain precautions such as not meeting face-to-face with this client. However, my name still went on his affidavit when I filed with the court. I recently checked public court records and the client is currently facing multiple charges of harassment, menacing by stalking, and violating a protection order.

I respect a client's right to disagree with my clinical decisions. When I meet with a client, I always make my identity and employer clear. A client may call Netcare and ask for me, for my direct supervisor, or our agency's Client's Rights Officer. A client may also contact my licensing board. There is no reason for a client to have my home address or personal phone number if they want to contact me regarding a work matter. I do not want to have to weigh the risk of my safety or my family's safety against the fulfillment I receive from providing this important and necessary service for the benefit of the community. I ask the committee to please vote yes on this bill and take an additional step to protect those of us that work with a sometimes challenging population.