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Committees:
Education
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  Subcommittee
Local Government, Public Safety,
  and Veterans Affairs
Rules & Reference
Transportation, Commerce, and Workforce

Gayle L. Manning
State Senator, Majority Whip
13th District

Chairman Burke, Vice Chair Beagle, Ranking Member Tavares, and members of the committee, thank you for allowing me to testify on Senate Bill 71 today. This bill will allow the Executive Director of the County Board of Mental Health delegating authority to enter into contracts for routine administrative and treatment functions up to $50,000.

The wording in this part of the code has been interpreted to mean that a formal resolution of the Board must be passed to approve every contract prior to the contract being signed by the Executive Director.

Clients who have overdosed, harmed themselves or may be a danger to others are required to stay in an emergency room due to their existing contract even if it is not the best fit. The current law stands that the Executive Director on the Mental Health Board is unable to approve the relocation of a client without with first being approved by the Board. Not placing a client in the appropriate treatment facility because of this law could be detrimental to the individual and accrue unnecessary costs. This legislation would allow someone in a crisis situation to be moved to a more appropriate treatment location with the approval from the Executive Director whether the board has had the opportunity to meet or not. The Executive Director would consider and evaluate the client's current condition by making a decision with best practices in mind. Current statute creates a barrier to help those in need in situations in which they need to act quickly.

This bill is permissive, that way each Board can determine the level of control they feel is necessary to meet their fiduciary responsibilities.

Thank you again, I am happy to answer any questions at this time.