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LEGISLATIVE ADDRESS

Good Morning committee members. My name is Rachael Paxton. I am here today for a two-fold purpose. First, I have an interest as the Fundraiser for the Carson Chapter of the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill (NAMI). Even more importantly though, I am also mentally ill.

I would like everyone to pause for a moment and take a good long look at me. Do I appear to be a healthy, vibrant ~~professional woman~~ ^{person}? Yes, I do. This is due to the necessary mental health services, including crisis intervention, medication and therapy, that I have been able to receive.

In other words, I am here today as the physical manifestation- or poster girl- for tax dollars well spent. Just call ~~me~~ ^{must be} positive reinforcement for well-funded mental health programs.

Unfortunately, had I been a resident of Southern Nevada when I needed these services I probably would not have been so lucky. Truthfully, due to the virtual lack of crisis services there, I would have ended up either in prison or in a pine box. Neither of which are good options.

Thankfully, I am able to provide myself as a wonderful example to this committee of why this mental health budget is so extremely vital. As a direct result of my receipt of services, I have been able to resume a normal lifestyle, attend school & should receive my real estate license in another month. Now I will again become a productive member of my community and a contributor to our tax base instead of continuing to be a lifelong tax drain.

It is my fondest wish that every mentally ill person be given the opportunity to receive those services necessary to allow them to contribute to society in a positive way and to help restore their personal dignity and pride.

Therefore, I ask that the committee cogitate thoroughly both sides of this issue. Please save the citizens of our great state a large fortune in future costs from an ignored problem while helping to end the ongoing and continual victimization and raping of the rights of the mentally ill.

As we stand today, we can either build 2 new prisons to continue to house persons who are ill and not truly criminals, or we can save billions by providing funding for services needed to help create productive, functioning and contributory society members like myself.

EXHIBIT T Senate Committee on Finance

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In close, I beseech and implore this committee to fund these ~~programs~~ ~~Thank~~
~~you for your time.~~ ~~progs~~ Much needed programs.

To stop balancing this State's budget
on the backs of the citizens who can
least afford it.

Thank you