



SUSAN TALAMANTES EGGMAN

REPRESENTING SENATE DISTRICT 05

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BEHAVIORAL HEALTH REFORM ADVANCES IN STATE SENATE

SACRAMENTO – Today, Senate Bill 43, authored by Senator Susan Talamantes Eggman (D-Stockton) was approved by the California State Senate Judiciary Committee.

SB 43 seeks to reform California’s Lanterman-Petris-Short (LPS) Act by updating the criteria for determining if a person is “gravely disabled,” the standard for involuntary treatment eligibility, including conservatorships. The LPS Act was adopted in 1967 and the definition of “gravely disabled” has not been amended since. Proponents of the legislation argue that the current focus of the LPS Act on the ability to provide for one’s food, clothing, and shelter is inadequate to address the real needs in communities across the state and often leads to criminalization and jail rather than treatment. SB 43 would update the definition of “gravely disabled” to include a new focus on preventing serious physical and mental harm stemming from a person’s inability to provide for their needs for nourishment, personal or medical care, find adequate shelter, or attend to self-protection or personal safety, due to their mental or substance use disorder.

“Over the last couple of years we have made critical investments and instituted important changes in our behavioral health laws, including the adoption of better data gathering requirements and, of course, the adoption of the CARE Act. More work remains to build out our system of care – notably in providing more supportive housing. It is also time to make changes to the criteria for determining if a person is gravely disabled. This bill is focused on helping the hardest to help; those with such serious mental illness that they frequently lack sufficient insight to even understand that they are severely ill. There is nothing compassionate about leaving suffering human beings on the street untreated or waiting until they have committed a crime and treating them in prison; rather than intervening to get them the help they desperately need,” said Senator Eggman.

Eggman, a clinical social worker, has worked in the past to expand the number of counties offering Assisted Outpatient Treatment and improve full-service partnerships, the wraparound programs that currently serve many Californians with the greatest needs.

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