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Involuntary Medication Bill Could Infringe On Due Process Rights

by Sarah Launderville

The room was cold. I remember it being very cold. Lights were bright and there were people who I did not know telling me to trust them. Trust you? The voices kept telling me not to trust them.

I could see my mother. Scared. She did not know what to do anymore. I could hear whispers but they were overpowered by the voices. Then silence. I was in Strawberry Shortcake land enjoying the sweet-smelling beauty and calmness of my adventure. Pink shoes and sweet treats filled my thoughts.

My mother's memories of me are very different during that time. Charcoal used to get the substances out of my system. Screaming at her. Lying unconscious on the floor. She was scared and had nowhere else to turn but to the professionals who might understand.

I hear voices. I have times when I cannot remember my name and sometimes think I am someone else. I have a hard time sleeping and have racing thoughts. And, on occasion because of these symptoms, I have been taken against my will, locked up in hospitals and had psychotropic drugs shot through my body in the name of safety to self and others. Drugs not to "treat," but to make you shuffle along in life and act like someone else wants you to act.

The medication put me in a state in which I could not fight for my rights. Many who have gone through this procedure called "treatment" will tell you that it is worse than some of the symptoms that got them there. In some ways it is very similar for those of us who have experienced trauma.

It is very, very difficult for those who have not

experienced it to understand.

I have heard from others who have similar stories. You are brought to a place in which people are to help you. They want you to be better. They want you to trust them. In

the end, they create a state of uncertainty, leave you in a room and watch you through a video camera. Sometimes you realize they are watching you and you try to escape the humiliation, the extreme suffering. They assume you do not feel, or understand what is going on, but sometimes you do. Sometimes you do not know how you got there, but then you wake up restrained and screaming. You need to meet their expectations before they remove the restraints. Back to a childhood experience in which you had no power and they have all the control. You find peace with the voices in your head, because that is who you are and who is there for you.

Legislators have to make a decision about whether to take away the due process rights of individuals. They need to hear about the process from the perspective of individuals who have lived through it, not from our doctors or families but from those whose rights have been taken away. The full picture will allow lawmakers a greater understanding of what these experiences are like from those who have been through it.

