

March 26, 2012

Thank you so much for giving us this opportunity to speak to you one more time before the vote goes in. My name is Lisa Terrill, and as you more than likely remember I am the mother of Courtney. She and I stood before you last Thursday and gave you a little glimpse into what our life together has been like over the past 18 ½ years.

Today I am here on behalf of all of the mothers, grandmothers, fathers, grandfathers, aunts and uncles, siblings and children of those with mental health challenges.

I myself have depression and mild bi polar. My mother was diagnosed with chemical imbalance and depression at a very young age. My father was never clinically diagnosed with depression but at the age of 12 I lost my father to suicide. Mental Health challenges have affected decades of our families and today you have an opportunity to stand up for us. Our state is in desperate need of mental health parity.

A few family members have spoken about how it is to have a child, grandchild or foster child with mental health issues. I was the child growing up with a parent with mental health issues. I remember at the age of 10 being called out of school to come home to my mother because she was having a nervous breakdown and needed help with my siblings. I remember sitting next to her bedside day in and day out begging her to please not kill herself because I needed her and she was all I had after my father passed. I remember hearing her sobbing in the middle of the night, not knowing that I was in my bed praying as hard as I could that God would just help take her pain away.

My mother is now 58 and has been able to persevere through some of these hard and trying times. Now she and I both work together to help not only each other but my children.

I love my mother very much but I wonder how different things would have been if I had been able to have my childhood...I was robbed of it because I had a parent with mental health challenges. And she felt if no one but me could help pull her thru. I wish someone else could have helped her. Our families out here are strong, they persevere and fight tooth and nail every single hour of every single day. All we are asking is that you do the same for us and by including Mental Health Parity in with the coverage for children Autism bill 414, 415, and 981.

You all know this is what our state needs...don't allow another day to pass, another child's life.

Sincerely,

Lisa Terrill