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Chair Weisz, Members of the Committee.

I write to you today in support of HB 1470.

Often, we hear, lock them up and throw away the key.

For most inmates struggling with mental health related issues, I believe you will find that the issues started at a young age.

For our son, they began long before he was 8 years old and introduced to juvenile justice through the McLean County Sherriff office. I mention him, because he is an adult now, with significant mental health challenges. He is awaiting trial on a multitude of charges. He will likely spend 3 – 5 years in the State Penitentiary. He will need ongoing support and care. Mental health issues do not go away just because a cell door is shut.

Regarding the study, I would add one key piece. I would add a family member if possible.

It would be interesting to determine how many inmates were born exposed to drugs or alcohol. How many have Autism. I know this is not key to the study, but how society cares for those incarcerated individuals will be a determining factor in their success after prison.

Thank you for your time.

Carl Young