

To CA State Senate Health Committee Hearing, Nov 13, 2025, Santa Ana Courthouse.

Senators Menjivar and Senator Umberg, and other presenters: Thank you for the honor of addressing you. I live in Sacramento County. I am an Advocate -Mom for 14 years.

My husband, daughter and I were early supporters of Care Court, and she is quoted in SF Chronicle in 2023 saying if Care Court had been available, she may not have gone to jail.

I am here today to offer my recent experience of being a Care Court Petitioner for my daughter, age 36, living with a diagnosis of Schizophrenia spectrum disorder since 2012.

Here's the short version: My Care Court Petition was implemented to the exact letter of the law. After meeting criteria, behavioral health care workers tried three times to meet with my unhoused daughter and offer services, which she rejected. This sent my Petition to the 1st Court hearing level. I received notice of a 2nd Petition being filed by Sacramento County Adult Correctional Health to be addressed at that same hearing. That Petition, written by professionals, outlined the four-year journey to deliver my daughter through her Felony charges and Incompetent to Stand trial treatment and training and back to court. They documented my daughter's diagnosis of Schizophrenia, her constant medication refusals and the symptom of Anosognosia where the person doesn't think they are sick or need help. Even the jail thought my daughter needed high levels of support to survive and avoid recidivism.

To summarize as much as I can, my Petition ended due to the Behavioral Health Assessment Report that stated my daughter was not deteriorating and was engaged in services voluntarily. The Correctional Health Petition was not heard because no Petitioner attended court. With intense family engagement my daughter had accepted supported housing through the Exodus Project and Prop 47 funding that delivers help after a long incarceration and an admission of either mental illness or addiction or both. This bypassed the issue of Anosognosia that was preventing engagement with behavioral health services that currently requires admission and treatment of a mental illness. It is strange and unfortunate to feel lucky my daughter was incarcerated so she still qualified for services despite her lack of insight.

I repeat, the Care Court process was implemented exactly according to the current written law. Yet, two months later, my daughter has lost housing again, and family is her only support. Her paranoia prevents trusting intake workers, so she won't answer questions to open the doors to services.

I am not willing to file another Care Court Petition, because of my daughter's Anosognosia. While experiencing this symptom, she will never agree to housing or other survival supports if services are contingent on agreeing to a diagnosis and treatment. So, until Care Court

finds a legal way to work around this symptom, there will be many, like my daughter, who are disqualified for not being able to engage voluntarily.

And that is my main message to this Health Committee Hearing: There is still a portion of our unhoused population who live with persistent serious mental illnesses who are unable to volunteer for services because the brain is physically compromised. That means Care Court in its current form leaves wide gaps for people to fall through.

I am terrified that if we Californians are not willing to have the difficult conversation about the full continuum of Care that includes 72hr to 12 month LPS Conservatorships, we may end up being pressured, ordered or militarized outside State control to build a compound like the one in Utah that I have no confidence will be run with the kind of respect, safeguards, and room for growth that California already has. Having more beds for Conservatorship and step down into Sub Acute Care would be a compliment to current Care Court legal limitations.

We are living in unprecedented times, and I appreciate ability to participate in democracy through attending this Hearing. I welcome your questions today or in future.

Lastly, I bring your attention to a documentary link below that includes my daughter and me on YouTube by ABC 7, called “A Mother’s Hope.”

With Appreciation and Hope, I Thank you,

Elizabeth Kaino Hopper

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Addendum:

- a) I saw first-hand how my daughter struggled to attend Care Court 1st hearing after more than two years incarcerated and court proceedings. Seeing how difficult that was for a young white European-looking woman, I can only try to imagine how terrifying it might be for someone with a background of racial injustice and/or in fear of ICE. I really don’t know how Care Court will be possible for some families in these troubled times—there are massive, legitimate fears to face.
- b) From where I sit, much of our family’s difficulty accessing higher levels of care is a direct result of the Negative Culture toward Higher Care that is perpetuated by leaders in the Peer Movement. LPS, AOT, and Care Act/Court continue to be negatively viewed, negatively spoken about publicly, and legally attacked by a preponderance of individuals, leaders and organizations in the Peer Movement. For example, Patient’s Rights Advocates stopped answering my daughter’s calls to them from the State

Hospital setting. They adamantly oppose locked treatment settings, yet they offer no alternative and certainly would not volunteer to take my daughter out of that State Hospital setting into their homes 24/7 with no breaks, and no supports to create psychosis safe homes, which is what they expect families and friends to do.

Thousands of us have done just that, and we have witnessed the long-lasting brain damage from leaving these symptoms untreated. If the Peer Movement leaders cannot support LPS perhaps a new concept of Hospice for SMI/SUD where only palliative care, (including substances to relieve suffering) is delivered for a better alternative to streets and jails. It would be a more honest approach than simply opposing involuntary care, opposing AOT, and opposing Care Act/Court.

- c) In case anyone wonders why family is not offering housing, I say that we were a healing home for almost 10 years, and with each repeated psychotic episode, our daughter lost functioning even though she tried just as hard as the next person to gain and sustain recovery. Over time, she became resentful of living with family who are senior citizens and stopped honoring house rules and boundaries. When she stopped taking medications, she became agitated, suicidal, and in need of medical attention, which became impossible to secure because Sacramento County Sheriff refuses to respond to mental health crises unless a crime is in progress. This criminalizes mental illness instead of supporting access to treatment. This was working practice well before the Sheriff's public declaration in February of 2024*. Our home becomes a den of ongoing distress and a barrier to receiving services. Just as in other illnesses, there are times for higher levels of treatment and care. Sacramento County is not the only area of California that experiences difficulties or impossibility of 5150 medical assessment and transport when needed.
- d) As a better solution to our 5150 response dilemma in b) above, some areas are creating medical responses to these psychiatric medical emergencies. Exciting work is happening in Greater LA County on creating and implementing a mental health crisis response by teams that are non-law enforcement, consisting of several trained behavioral health specialists . There are over 900 positive responses with several safe transports for medically necessary involuntary holds, according to a report given during a Nami GLAC Justice Committee in November. Ask me for contacts if needed.
- e) A journalist recently asked me about my Care Court Experience and asked me who I would blame! I said no one, it worked as written. I added that the Behavioral Health Workers are the key to robust implementation. Care Court Working Group Ad Hoc committees advise full SMI/SUD symptom training to employees. Respondents are not always accurate self-reporters, so are the workers trained to investigate facts in a Respondent's self-reports? We need workers to deliver these services with an attitude that Care Court is part of healing plan. Legislators can only do so much. Workers need

appropriate paychecks that retain them. With trained, compassionate employees who are ready to change the Negative Culture toward Higher Care, Care Act/Court can have the outcome we all funded and hoped for. CARE Act will reach its full potential!

The following are selected links to journalist coverage of Hopper Family journey:

<https://www.sfchronicle.com/politics/article/care-court-california-17781933.php> SF Chronicle by Sophia Bollag Feb 16, 2023 interviews Hopper family on Care Court

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N3CW8ldtnKk> ABC 7 Documentary by Tara Campbell, released October 2025 following 3 mom's journeys. EK Hopper and daughter are interviewed, please note daughter gave permission for filming during a time of stability.

Other reports of Advocacy that tell parts of Hopper family journey:

<https://www.abc10.com/article/news/politics/california-new-law-care-court-mental-illness/103-e2530b70-1976-4b78-a79e-53cbe3661462> October 10, 2025, Care Court amendment, short quote of EK Hopper and others

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gCBATlzmVqA> 60 Minutes, 2023 Rally in Support of CARE Court and interview with Anita Fisher, mom-advocate.

<https://www.npr.org/2023/03/29/1166281352/help-mental-health-illness-california-care-plan> NPR 3.29.23 Eric Westervelt interviews Sacramento County families about Care Court

<https://www.abc10.com/article/news/local/californias-care-court-slow-start-mixed-reactions-from-advocates/103-9aaf25ef-7767-4add-8d21-e48ef85be28a> ABC 10 on 7.4.2025 interviews EK Hopper and Diana Burdick on Care Court

<https://spectrumnews1.com/ca/southern-california/inside-the-issues/2022/08/02/moms-make-a-case-for-care-court> 8.2.22 Spectrum News LA interviews Care Court Support Rally organizers and attendees

https://www.chhs.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/Minutes_CARE-TTA-10.12.23.pdf Care Court Working Group minutes, 10.12. 23 EK Hopper public comments

<https://www.kcra.com/article/sacramento-county-deputies-mental-health-calls/63669920> 2.4 2024 KCRA 3 Sacramento County Sheriff no response to mental crisis

<https://www.capradio.org/articles/2025/05/01/they-called-for-urgent-help-with-a-mentally-ill-loved-one-why-california-police-refused/> May 1, 2025, Cap Radio By Lee Romney of CalMatters, EK Hopper quoted in support of alternative crisis response teams, near end of article.