



National Alliance on Mental Illness

# NAMI California

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April 14, 2021

The Honorable Henry I. Stern  
California State Senator  
California State Capitol, Room 4027  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: SB 340 (Stern) Lanterman-Petris-Short Act: hearings – SUPPORT**

Dear Assembly Member Irwin:

On behalf of the National Alliance on Mental Illness - California (NAMI-CA), I am writing to express support of your SB 340, which would ensure family, friends, or knowledgeable acquaintances can testify at Lanterman-Petris-Short (LPS) Act hearings.

NAMI-CA is the statewide affiliate of the country's largest mental health advocacy organization, the National Alliance on Mental Illness. Our over 110,000 active advocates and 62 affiliates include many people living with serious mental illnesses, their families, and supporters. NAMI-CA advocates on their behalf, providing education and support to its members and the broader community.

NAMI-CA believes involuntary inpatient and outpatient commitment and court-ordered treatment authorized by the LPS Act should be used as a last resort and only when cost-benefit analysis shows it to be in the best interests of the individual. All people should have the right to make their own decisions about medical treatment. However, NAMI-CA is aware that there are individuals with serious mental illnesses such as schizophrenia and bipolar disorder who, at times, due to their illness, lack insight or good judgment about their need for medical treatment. Existing law allows for consideration of past history, including that from family members, in making determinations about involuntary commitment and/or court-ordered treatment. However, current law does not compel the court to hear such testimony. SB 340 will ensure participation of family, friends, or knowledgeable acquaintances in LPS Act hearings where the stakes for individuals with severe mental illness are extremely high. Learning from loved ones about an individual's past history is often a reliable way to anticipate the future course of illness.

For these reasons, NAMI-CA is pleased to support SB 340. I may be reached at [jessica@namica.org](mailto:jessica@namica.org) or (916) 567-0163 with any questions you may have. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Jessica Cruz, MPA/HS  
Chief Executive Officer