Good morning, rather good afternoon.

First I want to say thank you for allowing me this opportunity to speak!

My name is "Jayette Lansbury" . I am the new York State Criminal Justice Chair  for the National Alliance on Mental Illness

 NAMINYS is a wonderful organization that  that represents thousands of New Yorkers

 who suffer with mental illness and their families. My position is to advocate for those w/ a serious mental illness who enter the criminal justice system and with and for their families.

I have a wonderful son,  who suffers with a serious mental illness and is on the high functioning Autism spectrum, and is currently trapped in the Forensic system. I say "trapped" because my son has been in 17 years because he accepted the " Insanity Plea". He was offered a 1- 3 but..... I knew he would not survive prison so.....he accepted the " Insanity Plea " not knowing he would be in there way longer.

I had a firsthand account of heartbreak of    seeing my son arrested, incarcerated , abused , and neglected at the county jail. He was treated so badly that he wanted to end his life to stop the TORTURE and NEGLECT at the county jail. NO person whether they suffer with a serious mental illness or not  deserves to be subjected to this type of treatment.: stripped naked  and thrown in  a bare cell or solitary due to suicide attempts. Staff letting other inmates beat and torture him.!!!!

Being placed in Solitary is PURE TORTURE!!!!!

I hear the horror stories everyday from families about the torture. abuse , neglect  that their loved ones suffer, The suicides in jails and prisons !!!!! 90% of suicides are related to a serious mental illness!!!!

There has to be a better Way!!!!!

We need more mental health courts, including youth courts, and they need to accept felonies , as  so.... many of our loved ones are psychotic when committing the crimes they are accused of perpetuating. We need diversion plans in place in every county We need CIT trained officers in  in every county!!!

We need to " BAN THE BOX"( SHU) Totally!!!! We need compassionate care and treatment for our loved ones!!!

When the police do arrest there should be  a safe place in every county that can be used for DIVERSION so .....they do not have to go to jail or prison to be tortured , abused and neglected!!!

We need to STOP locking up persons with a serious mental illness as an alternative to psychiatric care

It is a proven factor that when a person with a serious mental illness goes to jail or prison they do 35% longer term of incarceration. That is very unfair!!!!

Finally the juvenile justice system requires reform. Children should not be treated as adults and ALL youthful offenders should receive  mental health  evaluations  and access to diversion programs .Family input is imperative for offenders but, particularly imperative in regards to juveniles!!!Re entry services such as job training, would ensure that young people would be better prepared to become self sufficient and make a positive impact upon release.

Persons suffering w/  serious mental illness need compassionate care and treatment as well as their Families involvement to the fullest extent possible!!!!We  need humane services and more resources

We need to ERADICATE the stigma/ discrimination of serious mental illness particularly in ALL levels of the criminal justice setting!!!!!

So....... I ask of ALL of you for commitment to onsite diversion, humane treatment, BAN The SHU, re-entry services, NO Longer Incarceration times for those suffering with a mental illness, Family involvement at all stages, ongoing CIT training for law enforcement and corrections officers and much better evidence based practices.

Thank You

Respectfully

Jayette Lansbury

Criminal Justice Chair NAMI NYS