



Wednesday, February 20, 2019

nAMI TN's Day on the Hill

Support SB 1124 / HB 1455 to end the death penalty for people with severe mental illness in TN

This bill would:

- **RAISE AWARENESS OF MENTAL HEALTH IN TENNESSEE.** The current justice system consistently fails individuals with mental illness due to a lack of preventive community treatment options, restrictions to accessing mental health court, and limits on treatment while incarcerated
- **APPLY ONLY TO SENTENCING.** This law does not apply to whether someone is guilty or not guilty, only to whether they are eligible for the death penalty. Defendants with severe mental illness who are charged with violent crimes would still be eligible for prosecution and appropriate sentencing.
- **SAVE TENNESSEE TAXPAYERS MONEY.** This could amount to hundreds of thousands of dollars per case, which could be used for higher-priority needs such as treatment for people with mental illness, training for law enforcement, and victim's compensation.
- **BE ONLY A SMALL EXTENSION OF SOMETHING WE ALREADY DO IN TENNESSEE.** Our state already excludes people with intellectual disabilities from the death penalty. Excluding those with severe mental illness would simply treat these individuals the same way that we already treat people with intellectual disabilities.

60+

The number of those with
mental illness or intellectual
disability that have been
executed in the US since 1983

5-10%

Estimated percentage of those
on death row across the US with
serious mental illness

NAMI TN is proud to be a member of the Tennessee Alliance for Severe Mental Illness Exclusion (TASMIE), a coalition of mental health advocates, faith leaders, law enforcement and other groups who believe individuals with persistent and documented severe mental illness (SMI) should be barred from execution in Tennessee.