

Dear Chair Murray and Members of the Senate HHS Committee,

My name is Stephen and I am an Iraq War Veteran and a disabled veteran who receives treatment for my PTSD through the Veteran Affairs. In the summer of 2023, my depression completely incapacitated me; it was debilitating to the point where I missed over 3 months of work. During that time, I secluded myself from family, friends, and colleagues. I have a 10 year old son whom I was unable to visit because I had exhausted all of my vacation days. When I began having thoughts of what it would be like if I were dead, I knew I had to seek help.

I began ketamine treatment in March of 2024 over the course of a year. After the first few treatments, I felt free from the clutches of my depression, my mood shifted toward a hopeful outlook, and I began to repair my relationships with the people I loved. Most importantly, I was able to conserve my paid time off and see my son again. I still receive ketamine treatment as needed, and it has changed my life.

I implore the committee to reject SB 3184, as it may potentially jeopardize my ability to seek treatment. There are other veterans who also receive ketamine treatment through the VA and private practices. If this bill is passed, it could halt all VA ketamine treatment services for veterans suffering from severe depression.

I have a son whom I love, and his life, my life, and the lives of countless people will be impacted if this bill is passed. Thank you for listening to my statement.

Respectfully and Semper Fi,

Stephen