

8/2521

TO: The Florida Supreme Court

SUBJECT: Proposed amendment currently with the Florida Supreme Court to allow involuntary psychiatric commitment proceedings to be held virtually/remotely.

Your Honor,

As a citizen of Florida, I am against holding Baker Act hearings remotely/virtually and I believe a person should have the right to be present in any proceeding which threatens to take away their liberty and basic human rights.

In the recent past when Courts across the state were ruling that remote/virtual Baker Act hearings could be held, the Florida Supreme Court stepped in and made it clear that *this was a violation of rights and removed the lower court rulings.*

Now once again, there is a push to remove this fundamental due process right.

The argument being used to push for virtual Baker Act hearings is that *"the recent sustained and widespread use of this technology to conduct virtually all types of court proceedings strongly suggests that Baker Act proceedings can now effectively be conducted remotely while meaningfully preserving individual rights."* **This is not an argument; this is an incantation.**

Given the acknowledged and widespread misuse of the Baker Act, I am very concerned that the waiving of this fundamental due process right would lead to greater abuse of involuntary (Baker Act) examination and commitment in Florida. This would result in misdiagnosing, improper labeling and open the door to incorrect treatment and widespread drugging of the victims.

Further, it would exacerbate the already present violations including freedom from torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment and freedom from exploitation, violence and abuse, seclusion and restraint, as well as the administering of antipsychotic medication, electroconvulsive therapy (ECT) and psychosurgery without informed consent.

It is my belief that a person, along with their parent or guardian, should have the right to be present in any proceeding which threatens to take away one's personal liberties.

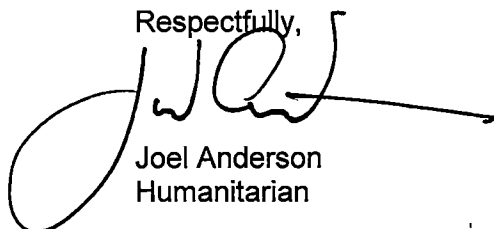
It is also my belief that until coercive practices such as involuntary examination and treatment are addressed, the right to be present at an involuntary commitment hearing must be upheld as a fundamental due process right and that the Baker Act should be excluded from the proposed amendment.

I trust you share my sentiments.

Thank you for allowing me to voice my concerns regarding this matter.

I trust you to make the humanitarian decision.

Respectfully,



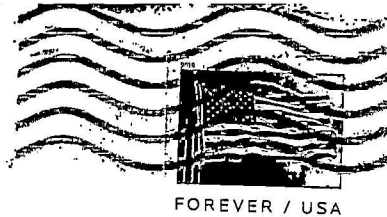
Joel Anderson
Humanitarian

Received, Clerk, Supreme Court

AUG 27 2021

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CLEARED

AUG 27 2021

FLORIDA SUPREME COURT

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