

2/2/2024

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to address the recommendation that I undergo medication as part of my treatment plan, in accordance with the legal proceedings currently before me. While I understand the importance of the objectives that this treatment seeks to achieve, I must express my sincere and profound inability to comply with this recommendation on the grounds of my deeply held religious beliefs.

The cornerstone of my argument lies in the fundamental protections afforded by the First Amendment of the United States Constitution, which guarantees the free exercise of religion. This foundational principle has been upheld and elaborated upon in various federal and Virginia-specific legal precedents, illustrating the critical importance of accommodating religious beliefs, especially within the context of medical treatment.

In the landmark case of **Employment Division, Department of Human Resources of Oregon v. Smith**, 494 U.S. 872 (1990), the Supreme Court articulated the standard for free exercise claims, emphasizing the need for government actions to be neutral towards religion. Though this case addressed the use of illegal drugs for religious purposes, the principle underscores the broader context of respecting religious practices unless there is a compelling state interest at stake.

Furthermore, the **Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act (RLUIPA) of 2000** extends specific protections to individuals in custodial settings, ensuring that their religious beliefs are accommodated unless there is a compelling governmental interest that cannot be achieved through less restrictive means. While RLUIPA is more directly applicable to land use and persons in institutionalized settings, the spirit of this law underscores the federal commitment to protecting religious freedom.

In Virginia, the case of **Myers v. Commonwealth**, 43 Va. App. 113 (2004), while not directly analogous, reflects the state's judiciary's recognition of the complexity surrounding mental health evaluations and treatments, including the considerations for individual rights and circumstances. Although not specifically addressing religious objections to medication, the decision underscores the importance of individualized assessments and the need to consider the defendant's unique situation and rights.

Given these precedents, I respectfully request that the court consider alternative forms of treatment that would not conflict with my religious beliefs. Non-medication-based treatments, such as counseling, therapy, or other behavioral interventions, could provide a viable path forward that respects both my religious convictions and the court's objectives.

I am committed to engaging in a treatment plan that addresses the court's concerns while also respecting my religious beliefs. I believe that with cooperation and understanding, a mutually acceptable solution can be found that upholds both the principles of justice and religious freedom.

Thank you for considering my request. I am willing to discuss this matter further and participate in finding an alternative treatment plan that aligns with both my religious beliefs and the legal requirements of my case.

Sincerely,

Warren Weaver