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Emotional testimony over the cost of ignoring postpartum depression highlights week of hearings on Frazier bills in the Senate

SACRAMENTO – State Senate committees approved five bills authored by Assemblymember Jim Frazier (D-Discovery Bay) this week.

AB 3032, Frazier’s bill to combat postpartum depression by requiring hospitals with perinatal units to develop and implement a program to educate mothers about maternal mental health, featured emotional testimony during a hearing before the Senate Health Committee.

Ed Pagett, an Orange County resident, told the story of how he lost his daughter, Charlene, and her newborn son to postpartum depression. Charlene had given birth to a son a year earlier, and she and her husband, Ken, were “thrilled” to be expecting to another child, Pagett said. It was an easy pregnancy by all appearances, Pagett said, and after a short labor Charlene delivered a healthy boy via natural birth. Then, completely unexpected, Charlene developed signs of depression, which Ken hid from the rest of the family at her request. When Ken finally revealed to the Pagetts that something was wrong, they tried to get Charlene into counseling, but had to wait several days for an appointment. Before Charlene’s first appointment, she took the life of her newborn child and then her own.

“I had tears in my eyes after hearing Mr. Pagett’s story, and so did several members of the Committee,” Frazier said. “The room fell silent and all ears were on Mr. Pagett as he spoke. His testimony really drove home that postpartum depression, and in extreme cases, psychosis, can affect any mother after she has given birth. His testimony also made clear the need for hospitals, where 99 percent of California births occur, to educate mothers and their loved ones about maternal mental health issues and how to spot the danger signs of postpartum depression. Research has shown that maternal mental health disorders are a common complication of pregnancy and childbirth, and occur in one out of five expectant or new mothers. Hospitals with perinatal units serve as ideal settings in which pre-and postpartum patients can regularly be checked and monitored by healthcare professionals who oversee the care of both mother and baby.”

At no time during the delivery did Charlene or Ken receive any counseling from the hospital about maternal mental health issues, Pagget said in his testimony.

“If only (Charlene) and her husband had been informed of these disorders,” Pagett said. “If ... hospital staff had received training, they might have noticed signs much sooner. If we had only known what to look for we could have sought treatment sooner and understood the gravity of this.”

The Committee approved AB 3032 9-0 and sent it to the Senate Appropriations Committee.

Senate committees approved four additional Frazier bills this week.

[AB 2441](#) would establish a funding mechanism for the removal of abandoned commercial vessels in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta. A recent Department of Fish & Wildlife survey found 54 derelict commercial vessels throughout the Delta. These large vessels are a significant threat to the environment, hinder navigation in the Delta and cost on average \$500,000 each to remove. The Senate Natural Resources and Water Committee approved AB 2441 9-0. The bill now moves to the Senate Appropriations Committee.

[AB 2061](#), The Clean Truck Deployment Act, removes an economic barrier for zero-emission and near zero emission trucks by allowing them to have the same carrying capacity as diesel trucks. The Senate Transportation and Housing Committee approved AB 2061 12-0. The bill now moves to the Senate Appropriations Committee.

[AB 2171](#) would require the three state agencies that provide services to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities to adopt an “employment first” policy to help ensure these individuals achieve their fullest employment potential. The Senate Human Services

Committee approved AB 2171 6-0. The bill now moves to the Senate Appropriations Committee.

[AB 2734](#) removes the California Transportation Commission (CTC) from under the oversight of the executive branch, reestablishing the CTC as an independent entity within state government. The Senate Governmental Organization Committee approved AB 2734 13-0. The bill now moves to the Senate Appropriations Committee.

In addition, two additional Frazier bills were recently approved by Senate committees.

[AB 1792](#) would allow Affordable Housing Authorities to use tax increments to finance the development of infrastructure that supports affordable housing projects. Improving the infrastructure around a project would be a practical and efficient approach to ensure infrastructure for these developments are up to code and capacity, while making local, state and federal dollars go further. The Senate Governance and Finance Committee approved AB 1792 7-0. It now moves to the Senate Transportation and Housing Committee.

[AB 2096](#) would create a voluntary checkoff fund (VCF) on state tax forms for Donate Life California, the nonprofit that manages the state's organ, eye and tissue donor registry. California has the largest registry in the nation, but the rate of registered donors is below the national average. Donate Life California would use the funds from this VCF for outreach to increase participation in the registry. More than 120,000 people are waiting for lifesaving transplants nationwide and 21 individuals die each day without a transplant. The Senate Governance and Finance Committee approved AB 2096 7-0. It is now in the Senate Appropriations Committee and is scheduled to be heard at a July 2 hearing.

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Assemblymember Frazier represents the 11th Assembly District, which includes the communities of Antioch, Bethel Island, Birds Landing, Brentwood, Byron, Collinsville, Discovery Bay, Fairfield, Isleton, Knightsen, Locke, Oakley, Pittsburg (partial), Rio Vista, Suisun City, Travis AFB, Vacaville and Walnut Grove.

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