

# **Mental Health Hospitalization Notification Passes Judiciary**

After the shooting death of Aplington-Parkersburg football coach Ed Thomas last year, the House Judiciary Committee passed a bill to update procedures for notifying law enforcement of the release of individuals hospitalized for a serious mental impairment. This would occur only if there is an arrest warrant or pending charges.

Senate File 2352 streamlines the process for law enforcement to be notified and addresses gaps in the system to assure law enforcement is notified.

The bill clarifies that a law enforcement officer can request that any court order include a requirement that the law enforcement agency is notified when an individual hospitalized for a serious mental injury is discharged. In addition, the bill provides an administrative process for law enforcement to use so they will be notified in this situation if a court order has not yet been completed.

In the case of Ed Thomas, Mark Becker was released from a Waterloo hospital with charges pending, but law enforcement was not notified. Becker drove from the hospital to Parkersburg and fatally shot Thomas the next day. Becker was found guilty of murder last week.