

PETITION

We Are Not Resting Until It's Right: Pass the ESCAPE Act

Petition to: HHS Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr., CMS Administrator Dr. Mehmet Oz, the U.S. Congress, the Governor of California, and the California State Legislature

Summary: Presley Gerber, 27, died less than 12 hours after arriving at a Santa Monica "sober living" residence. Federal prosecutors just charged the largest addiction treatment fraud scheme in U.S. history. Operators keep escaping accountability. Housing plus services requires a license. Pass the ESCAPE Act.

Why We Are Fighting

My son Jarrod died in 2004 at a sober living home called "The Safe House." I have spent 22 years fighting so that no other family has to bury a child the way I did. I am not resting until it's right.

Today, recovery residences tied to treatment programs call themselves "sober living homes" to avoid a license. They give patients medications and call it "self-administration." They coordinate with treatment programs for referral payments. And because of how the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Fair Housing Act are applied, states struggle to regulate them. These are not the peer-run sober homes of the 1970s. They are businesses providing clinical services with no one checking. When they get caught, they find a way out.

Highlighted Stories

Presley Gerber, 27: The Gap, Exposed

On September 20, 2026, Presley Gerber died at Resolutions Living in Santa Monica, less than twelve hours after he arrived. His cause of death has not yet been determined, and the investigation is ongoing. Our hearts are with his family. What his death has already revealed is exactly what the ESCAPE Act was written to fix. Presley died in a residence that called itself sober living, not in a state-licensed treatment facility. The outpatient program connected to it operated without a license or certification from California's Department of Health Care Services, under one clinician's professional license instead. Housing in one place, services in another, and no state agency responsible for the whole picture. His death did not create this gap. It exposed it, for the whole country to see.

The Nathan Young Indictment: \$1.6 Billion in Alleged Fraud

On October 22, 2026, the U.S. Department of Justice indicted Nathan Young and his father, David Young, of Los Angeles, in what it called the largest substance abuse treatment fraud scheme it has ever prosecuted. Prosecutors allege more than \$1.6 billion in false or fraudulent insurance claims. They say body brokers recruited vulnerable people from across the country, including people who were homeless or attending recovery meetings, and that patients were kept medicated and cut off from their families so the billing could continue. The defendants deny the charges, and the case will be decided in court. But the allegations describe the exact business model the ESCAPE Act is designed to shut down.

Read the announcement: <https://www.dea.gov/press-releases/2026/10/22/la-health-care-fraud-takedown-results-15-defendants-charged-including-six>

Asana Recovery: The Escape, Twice

The ESCAPE Act was written with Asana Recovery in mind. John's Law (AB 1356), which became law in California in 2025, was born out of a death at Asana Recovery.

Read John's Law: <https://legiscan.com/CA/bill/AB1356/2172>

Asana escaped accountability twice. First, when it turned in its licenses, the Department of Health Care Services still allowed its day center to stay open. Second, when Blue Cross Blue Shield of Oklahoma sued Asana in federal court, Asana's owners settled for \$7.5 million and walked away. For an industry this profitable, that is the cost of doing business. Families got no answers, and the operators kept going.

That is why it's called the ESCAPE Act. It ends the escape routes: surrendering a license while staying open, relabeling treatment as "housing," and paying a settlement instead of facing real consequences.

Brandon Nelson, 26

Brandon died in 2018 at Sovereign Health's facility in San Clemente. Sovereign's founder now faces federal criminal trial for insurance fraud and kickbacks. Brandon's parents, Allen and Rose Nelson, turned their grief into Brandon's Law (SB 434) and are co-advocates for the ESCAPE Act.

Jarrold Auttersen

My son. His death in 2004 started Jarrold's Law and 22 years of fighting for the families who came after us.

The Solution

The ESCAPE Act (Ending Systemic Collusion and Accountability Penalties Evasion Act) closes these loopholes with one simple principle: **housing plus services requires a license.**

Read the full ESCAPE Act:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1ZWqoJ7PVW5WjhqQsCEgqEWg8LynYtHBGbYWpQSkPN7A/view>

Learn more: <https://www.jarrodlaw.org>

We Call on Our Leaders To:

1. **Congress:** Clarify the ADA and Fair Housing Act so recovery residences that provide services, coordinate with treatment programs, or administer medications can be licensed and inspected, while protecting the housing rights of people in recovery.
2. **HHS and CMS:** Give states clear guidance on patient brokering, and tie federal recovery-housing funding to state licensing and oversight.
3. **California:** Pass the ESCAPE Act. Require a license wherever medications are administered. Close the loophole that lets addiction and mental health programs escape state oversight by operating under one clinician's license. Stop operators from surrendering a license while keeping their doors open. Enforce the Department of Health Care Services' existing authority over residential treatment.
4. **All of us:** Stop treating deaths in these facilities as unavoidable. They are preventable.

The ESCAPE Act is backed by leaders at UCLA's Semel Institute.

Jarrood. Brandon. Presley. People in recovery deserve real care, not a business model. Sign now and share. We are not resting until it's right.

Wendy McEntyre

**Wendy McEntyre
Founder, Jarrood's Law**