



State of Connecticut

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
STATE CAPITOL
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06106-1591

REPRESENTATIVE DEVIN R. CARNEY
TWENTY-THIRD ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

LEGISLATIVE OFFICE BUILDING, ROOM 4200
300 CAPITOL AVENUE
HARTFORD, CT 06106-1591

CAPITOL: (860) 240-8700
TOLL FREE: (800) 842-1423
Devin.Carney@housegop.ct.gov

MEMBER
ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE
HIGHER EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT
ADVANCEMENT COMMITTEE
TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

Public Health Committee Public Hearing Testimony March 4, 2015

Testimony In Support Of Proposed House Bill 5058 – An Act Concerning Substance Abuse Treatment

Good afternoon Co-Chairs Senator Gerratana & Representative Ritter, Vice Chairs Senator Crisco & Representative Riley, Ranking Members Senator Markley & Representative Srinivasan, and the esteemed members of the Committee.

My name is Devin Carney and I am the State Representative for the 23rd District which encompasses Lyme, Old Lyme, Old Saybrook, and coastal Westbrook. I am here today to testify in support of proposed House Bill House Bill 5058 – An Act Concerning Substance Abuse Treatment. I especially want to thank Representative Jay Case for proposing this very important legislation.

First off, I just want to acknowledge the families who have been affected by drug abuse and alcoholism, you are not alone and your voices are important here in Hartford.

I see this bill as a wonderful opportunity to help not only recovering addicts, but also their families. Having had a family member face this very issue, I understand how frustrating it can be to get addict to get help, especially when roadblocks appear. Currently, many detox and rehabilitation facilities will only take a person while they have a drug or alcohol in their system due to policy and/or insurance purposes. Usually the only other option is to pay out-of-pocket which can run in the thousands per week and tens of thousands per month – something most cannot afford. Alcoholics and drug addicts typically are not financially sound, so these burdens often lie squarely on the family.

Getting an alcoholic or drug addict to accept treatment is usually a Herculean effort on the part of the family. When an addict says 'yes' to treatment, the last thing one wants to do is tell them 'no', so the answer often means having the addict get high or drunk in order to get into treatment, which could be

one of the most counterproductive situations of which one can think. An alcoholic or drug addict is not simply cured because he/she didn't use long enough to have the substance in his/her body, which is what the current situation implies. For example, if a drug abuser doesn't use for a week, but has never received help and now wants to, they could be denied help because the traces of the drug could be gone. One week, one day, even one hour can be so important to one's recovery that going back to square one shouldn't be the only option.

I strongly urge this Committee to support this important bill because you will be helping addicts recover, but more importantly, you have the opportunity to help the families of addicts. The moms, dads, brothers, sisters, husbands, wives, sons, and daughters who must simply sit back and wait for that call for help...it may only come once.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Devin Carney".

Devin Carney
23rd District State Representative
Lyme, Old Lyme, Old Saybrook, Westbrook