

## CONNECTICUT LEGAL RIGHTS PROJECT, INC.

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### CLRP testimony regarding Proposed H.B. No. 5626 AN ACT CONCERNING PRESCRIPTION DRUGS FOR PSYCHIATRIC PATIENTS

Position: against this bill

Senator Gerratana, Representative Ritter, and members of the Committee:

Connecticut Legal Rights Project, Inc. (CLRP) is a legal services organization that advocates for low-income individuals in institutions and in the community throughout the state who live with mental health conditions with regard to their civil rights. We support initiatives that integrate individuals into the community. We protect clients' rights under the Patients' Bill of Rights.

This bill has as its stated purpose to prevent misuse of prescription drugs. That is a worthy goal. However, to accomplish this by prohibiting health care providers from prescribing more than a one-month supply of a drug to treat a patient's psychiatric condition would likely violate rights protected under the Connecticut Constitution. Article First Section 20 of the Constitution states that: "No person shall be denied the equal protection of the law nor be subjected to segregation or discrimination in the exercise or enjoyment of his or her civil or political rights because of religion, race, color, ancestry, national origin, sex or physical or mental disability."

This proposed bill singles out one particular group of people, people with psychiatric conditions, from being able to work with their doctors to manage their illness. The decision of how much medication to prescribe, and the number of months that can be safely prescribed, is a decision that should be made by an individual's doctor in consultation with the individual.

It is not factually accurate to ascribe inability to comply with a physician's prescribing order to all people with psychiatric disabilities. Presence of a psychiatric disability does not mean inability to follow prescribing orders. Legislation to address misuse of prescription drugs should be addressed to all people, not just those who have a psychiatric disability.