

Debra Dettor
Testimony to Judiciary Committee
Re: Opposition to HB-5531
March 18, 2016

Good Day, Senator Coleman, Representative Tong and distinguished members of the Judiciary Committee. I serve as Managing Director for the CT Community for Addiction Recovery. I am a person in long-term recovery since 1985 and have been committed to helping people find and maintain recovery from alcohol and drug addiction for more than 30 years. I have learned first-hand the many ways people get well – and many millions of people in our country are successful in their recovery. I also have first-hand experience with the barriers to recovery that get in the way for so many individuals and families.

I am unable to be at the hearing today and it is important to express my concerns to you about this bill. For me, the passage of this bill would funnel money into paying for FORCED medications 'or treatment' as a seeming solution to managing people who are struggling with illness. As a taxpayer, I oppose this. I want all the dollars I pay CT to fund services that matter and help our communities. Forcing treatment on people will cost a lot of money and not get the outcomes we need.

We need our citizens who suffer from substance use and mental health disorders to have the care they need to get well and live in CT as people with lives that matter – to them and their neighbors. I vote for community based recovery support services and additional treatment and professional care options that will help people do that. For people with addictive illnesses, already there is simply not enough of that in our state; national statistics tell us that less than 10% of the people WHO WANT treatment cannot access it. This is where we need to spend our tax dollars – supporting people who want to get well do just that. In my experience recovery requires much support and personal commitment and effort.

I want people to become addiction survivors, just like the people in my life who are cancer survivors. I am a survivor. Too many people are not surviving addiction and it is taking a toll on every aspect of our society. This bill will not change this. Involuntary interventions proposed by this bill are not the answer and will create more harm.

The problem of addiction requires a comprehensive community response that gets people working together to strengthen education, prevention, treatment, and recovery support resources. I am grateful I have been able to work on this, as one part of the solution for so many years. Please help us save lives by putting our resources into services that are demonstrated to be effective.

Thank you for your consideration and to your commitment to the people of our state.