

MR. CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE:

MY NAME IS THERESA DOONAN AND I AM A RESIDENT OF TRUMBULL CONNECTICUT. I AM ALSO THE MOTHER OF A SON, ALEXANDRU, WHO BECAME ADDICTED TO OPIATES AT THE AGE OF 14 AND PROGRESSED TO HEROIN, AND WHO DIED EXACTLY TWO YEARS AGO TO THE DAY (MARCH 7, 2014). SINCE THAT DATE I HAVE WATCHED 5 OF HIS FRIEND DIE AND I HAVE WITNESSED THE DEATHS OF OTHERS THROUGH-OUT SOUTHWESTERN CONNECTICUT.

I AM HERE TO SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO ADDRESS THE OPIATE/HEROIN CRISIS AFFECTING OUR STATE, AND THE ENTIRE COUNTRY.

I AM HERE AS AN ADVOCATE FOR ALL FAMILIES AFFECTED BY THIS EPIDEMIC – AND TO ASSIST THEM IN THE MAZE IN WHICH THEY FIND THEMSELVES LOST. 18 MONTHS AGO I FOUNDED HEROINKILLSCT AND HAVE PARTNERED WITH OTHER LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS. MY DIRECT GOAL IS TO ASSIST FAMILIES IN CRISIS IN FINDING HOSPITAL BEDS IN REHAB FACILITIES, AND CREATE A NETWORK OF SUPPORT.

SINCE JANUARY 2016, I PERSONALLY HAVE ASSISTED 6 TRUMBULL FAMILIES IN THE PLACEMENT OF THEIR CHILDREN, ALL UNDER THE AGE OF 21, IN FACILITIES. I HAVE GREAT HELP FROM DONNA DELUCA OF CARES AND MELISSA MCGARRY OF TPAUD.

IN JANUARY I WAS A CO-PANELISTS IN “A COMMUNITY DISCUSSION ON CONNECTICUT’S OPIATE ADDICTION CRISIS” WHICH WAS HOSTED BY REPS. RUTIGLIANO, DEVLIN, KUPCHICK, MCGORTY, and VAHEY, AS WELL AS SENATORS HWANG AND MOORE.

I HAVE BEEN INVITED BY LOCAL POLICE DEPARTMENTS TO WORK WITH THEM IN THEIR COMMUNITY PROGRAMS AS A FAMILY ADVOCATE AND AM IN THE PROCESS OF FORMING A CONNECTICUT CHAPTER OF “HOPE SOLIDERS” – A COUNTRY-WIDE NETWORK OF VOLUNTEERS – LAWYERS, DOCTORS, MEDICAL PROFESSIONALS, PSYCHOLOGISTS, SOCIAL WORKERS – TO

November I raised 15,000 in 7 days
to send our 2K-9s ^{able} to narcotics training certificate

PROVIDE GUIDANCE AND NO-COST ASSISTANCE TO FAMILIES IN THE THROES OF THIS EPIDEMIC.

WHILE I SUPPORT ALL LEGISLATURE AIMED AT ADDRESSING THE OPIOID/HEROIN CRISIS, I FEEL THAT THE MOST IMPORTANT LEGISLATURE BEING ADDRESSED IS:

1. ESTABLISHING A MURDER BY SALE OF AN OPIOID CONTROLLED SUBSTANCE, OR THE "DEATH BY DEALER" LAW. WHILE THIS WILL NOT STOP THE ILLEGAL SALE OF OPIOIDS, IT WILL GREATLY REDUCE THE LOW LEVEL STREET TRANSACTIONS FOR FEAR BY THE DEALERS OF RECEIVING A MURDER CHARGE.
2. REQUIRING ALL DOCTORS WHO PRESCRIBE OPIATES TO COMPLETE, AND MAINTAIN, CERTIFICATION IN ADDICTION AWARENESS.
3. RESTRICTING THE AMOUNT OF OPIOIDS PRESCRIBED IN ROUTING MEDICAL SITUATIONS SUCH AS DENTAL SURGERY.
4. REQUIRING MEDICAL INSURANCE COVER ADDICTION AS IT WOULD ANY OTHER INSURED ILLNESS.
5. MANDATORY DRUG TESTING FOR CERTAIN PATIENTS ON AN OPIOID REGIMEN TO ENSURE COMPLIANCE WITH USE. MANY DEALERS ARE PATIENTS WHO SELL THEIR PRESCRIPTIONS ON THE STREET.
6. EDUCATION OF OUR YOUTH STARTING AT THE ELEMENTARY GRADE LEVEL.

CONNECTICUT IS IN THE DARK AGES IN ITS HANDLING OF DRUG ADDICTION AND IN ITS RESPONSE TO THE OPIOID/HEROIN CRISIS.

THERE ARE ONLY ROUGHLY 1200 INPATIENT REHAB BEDS IN THE ENTIRE STATE. DOCTORS WHO PRESCRIBE SUBOXONE, OR

OTHER OPIATE REPLACEMENT DRUGS FOR THOSE WHO ARE IN TREATMENT, ARE RESTRICTED TO TREATING 100 SUBOXONE PATIENTS IN THEIR PRACTICE.

AS A MOTHER WHO HAS BEEN IN THE TRENCHES, WHO HAS BEGGED COURTS TO PUT HER SON IN JAIL, WHO HAS BEGGED JUDGES TO HAVE HER SON RULED INCOMPETENT SO THAT WE COULD PLACE HIM IN A REHAB – AT AGE 16 YOU CAN NOT FORCE YOUR CHILD INTO REHAB. IF THEY DON'T WANT TO BE THERE, THEY CAN WALK OUT THE DOOR – WHO HAS SPENT SLEEPLESS NIGHTS DRIVING AND KNOCKING ON DRUG DEN DOORS LOOKING FOR HER SON – I RESPECTFULLY IMPLORE YOU TO MOVE SWIFTLY AND AGGRESSIVELY IN PASSING THE CURRENT LEGISLATURE SO THAT FEWER FAMILIES WILL SUFFER THE SAME FATE.

I GREATLY APPRECIATE THE OPPORTUNITY TO SPEAK TODAY.

THANK YOU.

Sincerely,

Theresa Doonan
10 Sciortino Road
Trumbull, Connecticut