



## State of Connecticut

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
STATE CAPITOL  
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06106-1591

REPRESENTATIVE THEMIS KLARIDES  
ONE HUNDRED FOURTEENTH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

REPUBLICAN LEADER

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

CAPITOL: (860) 240-8700 or TOLL FREE: (800) 842-1423  
Themis.Klarides@housegop.ct.gov

### Testimony in Support of House Bill Number 6559 Finance, Revenue, and Bonding Committee March 17, 2017

Chairmen Fonfara, Frantz, and Rojas, Ranking Member Davis and Members of the Finance Committee, I would like to thank the Committee for hearing **House Bill Number 6559 – An Act Establishing A Credit Against The Hospital Tax For Hospitals That Make Beds Available For Opioid Addiction Treatment Services**

We are all well aware of the opioid addiction crisis in Connecticut and across the country. This problem does not discriminate. Victims are from rural, urban, and suburban areas. They are of all races. A report published recently by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention indicates that there were 299 heroin deaths in 2014. That number grew to 390 in 2015. The State Medical Examiner records show there were 444 heroin deaths in just the first half of 2016.

At the same time, we are facing a budget crisis that threatens the availability of state funding for opioid addiction treatment beds at hospitals. There is no single solution to this problem. We should work to protect state funding to battle opioid addiction and to support treatment. As another option, my sister and I have proposed HB 6559. The concept is simple: it gives hospitals a tax credit for making beds available to treat patients with opioid-related problems.

A lack of beds for treatment is one of the many obstacles that we face in addressing the opioid crisis. The tax break in HB 6559 creates an incentive for hospitals to provide more beds.

We urge the Finance Committee to support HB 6559 and look forward to working with members of the Committee to finalize the details of the proposal, which will give us another tool to deal with the opioid crisis.