



State of Connecticut
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
STATE CAPITOL

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Testimony in support of HB 5160
AN ACT CONCERNING THE DONATION OF BLOOD BY MINORS
Public Health Committee
February 28, 2018

Co-Chairs Steinberg, Gerratana and Somers, Ranking Member Betts and distinguished members of the Public Health Committee:

Thank you for raising **HB 5160 AN ACT CONCERNING THE DONATION OF BLOOD BY MINORS**. I offer my full support for this bill to increase the available blood supply in Connecticut and the region by amending section 19a-285a of the general statutes to allow 16-year olds to donate blood at volunteer blood donation programs if such 16-year olds produce written authorization from a parent or guardian prior.

Studied in 2012 in OLR Report 2012-R-302, sHB-6331 was raised & passed by Children's Committee in 2013 and referred & passed by Public Health & Education, only to die on the House Calendar. My preference is to start the 2018 concept in Public Health, as the committee that knows issues like this best.

My back-story of this bill started with a Newtown High School senior, named Harrison Eppers. His mom, Shelley Eppers is being treated for Multiple Myeloma, a rare blood cancer. Blood transfusions are one of the treatments needed to fight this form of cancer and one way to assure a regular supply of the life-saving blood needed. Some Multiple Myeloma patients hold blood drives.

Late 2017, Harry arranged and promoted a Red Cross blood drive at Newtown High School to help his mom. Students, faculty and community members came together to donate blood for Mrs. Eppers and the drive was a success. But, the boys learned it could have been twice as big, if not for a shortcoming in state law. Unlike most other states, Connecticut law does not allow individuals under the age of 17 to be blood donors.

With all the willing, able 16-year old potential donors at NHS and around the state, think of all the lives we can save with this simple change in policy. Please, let's agree to move this positive policy revision forward as quickly as possible.

Thank you again for your consideration of HB 5160 and I urge the committee's support.

Respectfully,

Representative Mitch Bolinsky