



**Testimony
Rudy Marconi
First Selectman, Town of Ridgefield
On Behalf of the
Connecticut Council of Small Towns
General Law Committee
March 12, 2019**

RE: SUPPORT - HB- 7159 - AN ACT ADDRESSING OPIOID USE.

My name is Rudy Marconi, First Selectman of the Town of Ridgefield and President of the Connecticut Council of Small Towns (COST), which represents 110 smaller communities throughout Connecticut.

COST applauds Governor Ned Lamont's proposal to strengthen the state's efforts to address the opioid crisis by calling for changes to reduce the misuse of prescription opioids and enhance communication between health care providers and patients. HB-7159 builds on drug overdose and prevention initiatives adopted in previous years, which have helped our communities respond to this public health crisis.

According to the state's Chief Medical Examiner, there has been a 2% decrease in fatal drug overdoses in 2018 compared to 2017 and fewer overdose-related emergency room visits. However, rates for opioid overdoses and emergency room visits are still approximately 1.7 times higher than the national rate.

As a state, we must do more to address this crisis, which has devastated individuals and their families in every town in Connecticut.

COST stands ready to work with Governor Lamont and lawmakers to support efforts to confront Connecticut's opioid crisis head on.