

Testimony of Michael Askew, Director of Recovery Advocacy
Connecticut Community for Addiction Recovery
Before the Public Safety and Security Committee
March 2, 2021

Good morning, Senator Bradley, Representative Horn and distinguished members of the Public Safety and Security Committee for allowing the CT Community for Addition Recovery (CCAR) to provide input on Public Safety and Security Committee bills. I am Michael Askew, Director of Recovery Advocacy and a person in long term recovery, and I am offering testimony and oppose H.B. 5583 AN ACT CONCERNING EMERGENCY INTERVENTION BY A POLICE OFFICER WHEN A PERSON SUFFERS AN OVERDOSE.

I remember back in 1986, when I stood before the judge in a criminal case being sentenced. I was offered 3 years in prison or 18 months in a residential setting. **Choice**

CCAR has 20 recovery coaches that are supporting 23 Emergency Departments in the state. Many times, the person that was transported to the emergency room is given a **Choice** to speak to a recovery coach before they leave the hospital.

CCAR

My concern with this bill is there would be no choice when someone has an opioid overdose and subsequently may have people not wanting to contact 911 if they know they will be taken into custody. Is that allowing someone the civil right to choose what they feel best for them? They should have a **Choice**.

DPH has compiled data on transportation to a hospital for those that had an opioid overdose and it showed less than 1.2% of 5,060 responses refused. Most people are willing to go to the ED. With the few people that refuse, why place a firmer standard. They should have a **Choice**.

Other concerns are whether law enforcement is qualified and prepared to decide whether that person is still incapacitated or well enough to make that decision on their own. It is true that individuals that have an opioid overdose are fully aware once that are revived.

I strongly oppose HB8553 and thank the committee for allowing me to testify before you.

Sincerely,

Michael Askew