



State of Connecticut

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Public Safety and Security Committee Public Testimony March 2, 2021 Testimony in Support of House Bill 5583

Chairmen Bradley and Horn, Ranking Members Champagne and Green, and Members of the Public Safety and Security Committee, I would like to thank the committee for hearing testimony on **House Bill 5583: An Act Concerning Emergency Intervention by A Police Officer When A Person Suffers an Overdose.**

This bill is an important proposal to allow a police officer to take a person into custody when the officer has reasonable cause to believe that such person is experiencing a drug overdose and the officer has administered an opioid antagonist or taken other lifesaving measures.

Furthermore, we can define custody in two ways based on the Cambridge dictionary definition. First, custody is defined as "the legal right or duty to care for someone or something". Secondly, custody is defined as "the state of being kept in prison, especially while waiting to go to court or trial". To demonstrate which interpretation is most probable to use we can call on the Connecticut General Statutes. Section 21a-279c states "To the extent that it is possible, medical treatment rather than criminal sanctions shall be afforded individuals who breathe, inhale, sniff or drink the volatile substances described in subdivision (49) of section 21a-240".

By interpretation of these regulations and definitions, we can further grasp that if an Officer does bring an individual into custody for the belief that this said person is overdosing, then it is determined that medical treatment needs to come first, far before the idea of calling on the court.

I urge the Public Safety and Security Committee to act favorably on House Bill 5583: Every small step we take towards fighting this opioid crisis is one bigger step for a brighter Connecticut future. Thank you.