



Connecticut Association of Paramedics and EMTs

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Thank you Chairpersons Horn and Bradley, and esteemed members of the Public Safety and Security committee. CAPE has come forward today in opposition to HB 5583 as it is written. We understand what the intended goal of this legislation is however, we do not feel this is an adequate or moral solution. First, our concern is that this bill could deter witnesses from activating the 911 system in fear of having their loved one taken into custody. In recent years many efforts have been made, including not criminally charging opiate overdose patients, to prevent unnecessary death due to fear of calling 911. We are worried that passing this bill would negate all those efforts. We also believe that the terms "custody" or "protective custody" should be clearly defined. Furthermore, taking someone into "Protective custody" and forcing them to be transported to the hospital against their will is removing a patient's right to patient autonomy. We are concerned about the repercussions of taking that right away from patients that are alert, oriented, and able to make educated medical decisions. Decision making capacity of a patient is a clinical concept and not something that should be determined by individuals outside of the medical community. Paramedics and EMTs have gone through in-depth training on the potential risks of overdoses, patient refusals, and determining the patient's capacity to make informed decisions while respecting individual autonomy. We find it irresponsible to allow non-medically trained individuals to make this determination, remove the patient's right to autonomy, and in turn force them to undergo medical treatment against their will. We feel broadening the ability to place patients in protective custody will increase the unjust misuse of the protective custody system EMS providers are already witnessing.

In conclusion, CAPE identifies and agrees that there is a lack of appropriate resources to properly treat patients suffering from addiction. We welcome all opportunities to work with legislators and put forth a collaborative effort to ensure that patients across the state are offered a solution that not only provides the care that they need but, also keeps patients' rights intact. We believe there are more reasonable measures that could be put in place utilizing programs and resources that already exist. We welcome and encourage any questions you may have. Thank you for your time.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Derrick M. Caranci", written in a cursive style.

Derrick M. Caranci

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