



CONNECTICUT
LEGAL
RIGHTS
PROJECT, INC.

TESTIMONY OF KATHLEEN FLAHERTY, ESQ.
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, CT LEGAL RIGHTS PROJECT, INC.
PUBLIC SAFETY AND SECURITY COMMITTEE PUBLIC HEARING
MARCH 2, 2021

In opposition to: SB 396 AN ACT ALLOWING LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS TO TRACK AND TRACE CELLULAR PHONES OF YOUNG ADULTS IN DISTRESS.

In opposition to HB 5583 AN ACT CONCERNING EMERGENCY INTERVENTION BY A POLICE OFFICER WHEN A PERSON SUFFERS AN OVERDOSE.

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Senator Bradley, Representative Horn, Senator Champagne, Representative Green and distinguished members of the Public Safety and Security Committee:

Good afternoon. My name is Kathy Flaherty and I'm the Executive Director of Connecticut Legal Rights Project (CLRP), a statewide non-profit agency that provides legal services to low income adults with serious mental health conditions. CLRP was established in 1990 pursuant to a Consent Order which mandated that the state provide funding for CLRP to protect the civil rights of DMHAS clients who are hospitalized, as well as those clients who are living in the community.

SB 396 may have a worthy goal of providing a way of locating young adults who may require assistance. However, it ignores the reality that these young adults are adults who have a right to privacy and to exercise choice, even if they remain financially dependent on their parents and live with their parents. The proposal does not consider that families of origin may be abusive or that young adults often seek time and distance away from their families and that does not automatically mean that they are in danger.

HB 5583 is unnecessary. Connecticut already permits this kind of intervention pursuant to existing law (see C.G.S. §§ 17a-680 *et seq.*); these laws have been in place since the mid-1970's. There is a reason that law enforcement officers don't already implement these existing laws: forced treatment rarely results in sustained, long-term recovery.

I urge the committee to reject both of these bills. I thank you for your consideration.