



State of Connecticut

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PUBLIC SAFETY AND SECURITY COMMITTEE

Public Hearing
March 2, 2021

Testimony in Support of House Bill 5583 **AN ACT CONCERNING EMERGENCY INTERVENTION BY A POLICE OFFICER WHEN A** **PERSON SUFFERS AN OVERDOSE.**

Dear Co-Chairs Senator Bradley and Representative Horn; Ranking Members Senator Champagne and Representative Green and other distinguished members of the Public Safety and Security Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of HB5583: *An Act Concerning Emergency Intervention by a Police Officer When a Person Suffers an Opioid Overdose.*

The opioid crisis has affected many lives not just in this state, but across the nation. Day after day adults and young teens are overdosing on prescription drugs and heroin. In 2019, Connecticut saw its highest number of opioid related deaths, with the crisis claiming the lives of 1,200 people.

Though this crisis is ravaging our state, it is present law that any citizen, no matter how bad the condition and regardless of their family's pleas, after Narcan being administered the victim can refuse transport to the hospital. This at times, has resulted in police officers and medical teams being called multiple times a day in order to administer Narcan to the same victim.

This bill would let Connecticut join its New England neighbors such as Massachusetts and Vermont, by allowing any police officer with reasonable cause, to take victims to a hospital for emergency examination, evaluation and hopefully arrange for medical support or rehab. options Massachusetts have drafted new laws that allow police officers to place people who have overdosed into protective custody and transport them to the hospital for evaluation. Massachusetts has even crafted into their law the ability for officers to search the patient. With respect to the Massachusetts law, a person is deemed "incapacitated and in need of medical attention" if Narcan has been administered and they are conscious (even if they are then declining or refusing further medical care). I have included the direction from the Massachusetts Executive Office and Public Safety and Security, as found through the Northampton Police Department:

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Representative Carol Hall

Testimony in Support of HB-5583

- "V. Incapacitated by Drugs and Other Substances Other Than Alcohol MGL Ch 11E S 9A A.
DEFINITIONS Incapacitated: The condition of a person who, by reason of the consumption of a controlled substance or toxic vapor or other substance other than alcohol is (1) unconscious, (2) in need of medical attention, (3) likely to suffer or cause physical harm or damage property, or (4) disorderly.

This would ease the burden on our first responders by cutting the amount of multiple house visits they make and ease the stress on the families of these victims and in the end get these victims the help they so desperately need.

I implore the Public Safety and Security Committee to support HB5583.