



Public Health Committee  
March 2nd, 2021

*Testimony in Support of HB-5583*

**AN ACT CONCERNING EMERGENCY INTERVENTION BY A POLICE OFFICER WHEN A PERSON SUFFERS AN OVERDOSE.**

*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.*

Co-Chairs Horn and Bradley; Vice Chairs Osten, Paolilo; Ranking Members Champagne and Green; and distinguished members of the Public Safety & Security Committee:

*My name is Alexandra Kurjiaka, I'm part of a growing coalition of your constituents and we thank you for allowing us to submit testimony in support of HB-5583*

*A friend suggested I share my story with you so that you can better understand what our community is going through as you deliberate these critical proposals - so here goes:*

*My name is Alexandra Kurjiaka. I was born and raised in Danbury, CT but lived in NY for 7 years before returning to my hometown. I live here now with my husband and 2-year-old son. I am also in recovery and have been for 12 years. Both my mother and my sister are in recovery and we all chose opiates as our substance of choice.*

*I have worked in the behavioral health field for as long as I have been sober...attending a residential treatment program that allowed me to become an employee and begin my career. Today, I am an LPCA and support clients and families to find solutions and comfort as they navigate the treatment landscape - a landscape that has become more and more unobtainable and confusing to many who seek and need life-saving treatment.*

*I have lost so many friends and family to death by an overdose. This devastation is known not only to me but the community in which I love and the beautiful people that organized and created the Brian Cody's Law family. I currently serve on their advisory board as a clinical liaison and hope to help those who need access to treatment services - services that can become more obtainable by the legislative action you have the power to enact. You have a unique opportunity to make changes that would impact so many. I implore you to read all of these testimonials and imagine that your mother, brother, daughter, best friend or neighbor were the benefactors of the proposals before you. Their lives could be forever changed by your hand. Help us help the people we all love. Thank you!*

*I simply ask you to strongly consider taking the following action:*

- Review and support HB-5583, as well as a package of similar proposals that our foundation refers to as Brian Cody's Law.*
- Understand that hundreds members affiliated with Brian Cody's Law are in support of this proposal, sponsored by State Representative Carol Hall, from the fifty-ninth assembly district.*
- Consider as well that Brian Cody's Law calls supports any proposal that provides enhanced support systems to help those struggling with opioid addiction, stricter penalties for suppliers of lethal overdoses, better oversight of tracking opioids and waste, and ending safe havens – such as 'trap houses' where numerous overdoses occur on a frequent basis.*
- Please also consider that Brian Cody's law opposes taking addicted people into 'custody', we should not continue the 'lock our way out of this' approach - but rather our organization suggests a 72 hour hold and urges the client be placement into a clinical setting with appropriate supports in place.*

- *Read up on the factors that are driving this effort forward on our website [BrianCodysLaw.org](http://BrianCodysLaw.org) and take action with us.*

*In this last decade, 500,000 Americans lost their lives to opioid use disorder. In 2020 alone, right here in your state, overdose deaths hit historic levels. Again! Thousands of citizens here in Connecticut have died since our organization's initial requests were filed. This simply cannot continue!*

*Do we have your support?*