



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 Erin Mccauley, 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 Erin and I'm in recovery for opiate abuse. It has been 15 years of struggling, even though I've managed to stay clean for the last 3 years it's still a struggle. But that's not the reason I'm writing this. Everyone has a story! I'm writing on here because one of the biggest problems we have, one of the reasons why kids are dying is because they are scared to call 911. They are scared that when they call 911 they are going to get in trouble! And depending on the cop they are correct! There needs to not just be a law that states if you call nine-one-one you will not get in trouble, but it also needs to be enforced. I have lost over 9 friends and three family members do to overdoses of heroin! And from my understanding four of them would still be alive if the people they were with weren't scared to call the police!

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 of 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 for 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 placed into a clinical setting with appropriate supports in place.*
- *Read up on the factors that are driving this effort forward on our website BrianCody'sLaw.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?