

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 Patrick Mitchell, 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 family has been impacted by opioid use across several fronts. Having laws like this in place could definitely have prevented the loss of life of two people in my world. The first was a friend and all-around great guy named, Todd. He would have given you the shirt off of his back to help you when he could. Super smart and funny but he could never kick the addiction to drugs. He was denied a stint in rehab and it would lead to him losing the battle with it months later.*

*Another is the great kid that this bill is named after. Now I know that he was an adult but I see him as a kid because he was so young and still had so much life ahead of him. He had a little one on the way and already had a daughter who was his world. He knew that he needed additional help and was denied an extended stay by his insurance.*

*The last one is my brother-in-law. My kids have been denied the chance to ever get to know their uncle because he has a problem that has lead him to either be in jail or lost out on the streets. The current system is not able to provide the rehab that he needs to get better. My wife's family has been struggling with how best to help him but it is not something that they can do on their own.*

*We need things to change and this law is an excellent start.*

*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?*