

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 Elizabeth Pooler, 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 affected by the opioid crisis in several ways, my youngest daughter (now 33) has used for 17 years- right now has been clean for 6 months. Getting her into a treatment facility is always a nightmare. The facilities want money upfront and no insurance- you best look elsewhere. Addiction is a disease and needs to be addressed as such - would a hospital turn down someone with diabetes??

Shouldn't the drug companies have some sort of responsibility for this crisis??

As her family she gas stolen money and other items throughout our house to get a fix!

She had two children- one now eight and the other 19 months. We are on the process of adopting the 8 yo as we have raised her since she was one- we got temporary legal custody when she was two. Which another problem- grandparents or other family raising the addicted persons children- really needs to be addressed as we are pushed to the side! Addiction is a family disease!!

We ended up getting the 19 month when he was eight months old- and had him for approximately 9 months.

It has been an emotional roller coaster for the whole family including our daughter-

Weeks would go by when we didn't hear from our daughter- was she alive??

Yes- legislation needs to happen in the many aspects of addiction! I have so much more to say ...

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 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?