

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 Matthew Scozzafava, 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:

I lost my brother do to how treatment centers operate today. We had him go to a treatment center where we thought he would be look after once he almost overdosed after a family party on Easter. Then we realized we could not care for him 24 hours a day in order to keep him from seeking out opioids and possibly over dosing again. Once he got there He was basically coerced to leave because he tried to light a cigarette with remote batteries. Which later lead to him being put back on the streets without housing or and supervision. Where he died of an overdose after sneaking in to our home to what he acquired on the way. With this law in place we would of been aware of what happened and could of prevented it from occurring in the first place and possibly never being able to be released in such a state. Hopefully this law can help others struggling and prevent other families from suffering the same lose as ours.

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?