

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 Casey Villa, 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 am 17 years old and was taking from my mother at the age of 11. I've been raised by my grandparents because by father passed away and my mother became an addict. She was put on medication for anxiety and depression. Soon after that she was on pain medication. My mother soon became addicted to herion. DCF came and picked me up from school in the 5th grade and I wasn't allowed to go back home. That was very scary and no child should have to go through that. We need more beds available for people who need to get help. And we need better insurance programs. My 20 year old cousin was in rehab in New Jersey because there wasn't any beds available in Connecticut. After the 28 days he called home telling his parents he wasn't ready to leave that he needed more time in the program. The insurance wouldn't pay for anymore time. They said he had to do out patient programs. Well that wasn't what he needed. He went to his out patient program the day before he was found dead in a trap house. He needed more help in patient. No insurance company should deny anyone help they need. My Uncle had good insurance for my cousin and they denied him the extra time. Please help we have a problem with this opiod epidemic.

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?