

Testimony in Support of Rhode Island House Bill 5171

Honorable Members of the House Health and Human Services Committee,

My name is Stacey Levin, and I submit this today not just as a citizen, but as someone who has walked the difficult path of chaotic substance use and recovery. I stand in full support of House Bill 5171, a lifeline for those still struggling with substance use disorder.

I know firsthand the isolation, fear, and desperation that come with addiction. There were times when I felt completely alone, when every moment was a battle between survival and the overwhelming pull of substance use. Overdose prevention centers would have been more than just a safety net for me – they would have been a beacon of hope.

Overdose prevention centers provide so much more than a safer place to use pre-obtained illicit substances. They provide people with connection to people and care. At my lowest, what I needed most was compassion, not judgment. Overdose prevention centers provide exactly that – a non-threatening space where individuals can:

- Consume substances under medical supervision
- Access immediate medical intervention if needed
- Connect with treatment and recovery resources
- Receive health screenings and support without stigma

Every life has value. Every person struggling with addiction deserves a chance – not just to survive, but to recover and thrive. Overdose prevention centers are proven to:

- Reduce fatal overdoses
- Decrease public drug consumption
- Connect individuals to treatment services
- Save lives and families

As someone who has been through the darkness of addiction and found my way to recovery, I can say with absolute certainty: these centers save lives. They are not a solution to addiction, but they are a critical bridge to recovery.

I urge you to support House Bill 5171. You're not just voting on a piece of legislation – you're voting to save lives, to offer hope, to show compassion to those who need it most, and address this public health crisis in a progressive and innovative way.

Respectfully submitted,

Stacey Levin
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