

## **SB0546 - Criminal Procedure - Medical Emergency – Immunity**

Committee: Judicial Proceedings

Date: March 8, 2023

POSITION: Support

Madame Chair and Members of the Committee,

I asking for you to give a favorable report on **SB0546 - Criminal Procedure - Medical Emergency – Immunity** because I think it can save lives. I am a paramedic and a registered nurse. I have been on the front lines in emergency care for nearly 30 years. I know a few things about saving lives.

My older son, Sam, was a funny kid. He was kind of little kid who wanted to know if the trash incinerator off of I-95 in Baltimore was where they made clouds or why a snowman refused to come alive when you put a hat on its head. He was the kind of older kid who gave his lunch money to a homeless person he saw digging through a dumpster for food and taught most of the younger kids in the neighborhood to ride a two-wheeler.

Sam, though, grew into a troubled young man who fought mental health issues and substance abuse. He fought his disease as best he could. But I know from my working life, sometimes you can do everything still have a bad outcome. We lost Sam to a Fentanyl overdose on May 24<sup>th</sup> of last year. He was 22.

When he died, Sam was serving out a probation before judgement verdict for the kind of things that happen with a person who has a drug problem. I ask no sympathy for his crimes, but only for a little understanding that this wasn't a bad kid - this was kid with problems. We tried to get Sam help, but he was reluctant because he was worried that he would be in violation of his probation. He feared that consequence enough to risk his life and that was exactly what it cost him everyone that loved him.

The other thing I know from working life is that, when you lose a patient, there is only one thing you can do - go try to save the next one. And that's why I'm here, because I think the protections provided in this bill removes one more barrier to seeking care and can help save that next one. I have included a letter signed by 30 physicians, nurses, first responders, and other healthcare providers who agree. That next one is out there, and this bill might save them. It is the one thing my broken heart can ask for that it might still get.

This is a public health crisis. It's more than 2000 dead Marylanders every year. It's a daughter and son left without their dad. It's a sister getting a call that her brother is gone. It's a father finding his son – his son who thought trash could become clouds and snowmen could dance – cold and dead in his room.

I am happy to take any questions you might have.

Thank you,

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