

Dear Judiciary Committee,

Thank you for your time and consideration regarding bill HB 2365.

My brother Mark Whitt age 47 passed away on February 7, 2021. He wasn't feeling well that morning he was homeless living in a tent down by the river. After collecting firewood for the fire he used to stay warm he collapsed and it was told to me by his friend that he was breathing funny so they laid him down. Most people when someone isn't breathing well have the thought of I should call for help. His friend also had this initial thought but ultimately decided not to call for help because they did have drugs in their possession, as well did not want to draw attention to the area as they were not the only homeless individuals in this location. Shortly after laying down Mark stopped breathing and his friend attempted CPR but was unsuccessful, they then called for help after it was too late. What should have been a call for help became a call for the coroner. There is no way to know if calling for help earlier would have saved his life, but it would have given our family some peace to know that everything was done to save him. Yes, he was a drug addict and was breaking the law by his action of drug use but he was a brother, father, son, friend and above all that a good human being, who deserved his chance to live. Not calling for help in an emergency situation because of the fear of prosecution on a minor drug charge is not how anyone's opportunity to live should be determined. Is a drug charge really worth the cost of someone's life? That is what this bill is about. I am an RN as well as Mark's sister and when helping patients it is not about judging them but about helping them to live in whatever capacity that patient needs. This bill is important for everyone to have a chance to live and receive emergency services regardless of drug use.

Respectfully,

Bobbie Kramm RN BSN