



## Office of Mayor Miro Weinberger

February 22, 2018

Senate Committee on Institutions  
Sen. Peg Flory, Chair  
Sen. John Rodgers, Vice Chair  
Sen. Dick Mazza  
Sen. Francis K. Brooks  
Sen. David Soucy

Dear Senator Flory & Members of the Senate Committee on Institutions,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of S.166 last week. I believe the bill, as originally introduced, will save lives and, given what we have learned of the impact of similar changes in Rhode Island, may prove instrumental in turning the tide of the opioid epidemic here in Vermont.

The importance of these changes drove the Vermont Mayors to call for legislation like the bill before you, and S.166 as introduced has widespread support among a broad coalition of actors – medical professionals, law enforcement professionals, civic leaders, and recovery experts – as symbolized by the support of the Chittenden County Opioid Alliance.

Chairwoman Flory asked that I review the proposed amendments from the Department of Corrections to the bill. I and my team have reviewed the proposed changes, and do not believe they should be accepted. There is no compelling reason to further delay implementation of this bill in order to study the issue of inducing new patients.

We respect the changes the Department of Corrections has already committed to in prior months around medically-assisted treatment in its correctional facilities, but in the face of clear evidence from Rhode Island as well as the unequivocal outcome of recent, well-respected studies in Vermont such as that conducted by Dr. Rick Rawson at the Vermont Center on Behavior and Health, we see no reason to delay the implementation of the induction and treatment measures outlined in S.166 as originally proposed. This will save lives, plain and simple.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M. Weinberger", is written over a light blue rectangular background.

Miro Weinberger  
Mayor, Burlington VT