

ryan paige
Maine Recovery Advocacy Project

Dear Senator Desambault , Representative Warren and esteemed members of the Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee.

My name is Ryan Paige and I am a person in long term recovery and an organizer with Maine Recovery Advocacy Project. I am also a person that has suffered with substance use disorder and was subsequently incarcerated. I am writing today in support of LD 967.

My basis for supporting this bill is simple; people that suffer with the illness of Substance Use Disorder require treatment. Treatment that is not adequately provided in correctional institutions. I speak to this from personal experience. I have struggled with substance use disorder for the majority of my life resulting in multiple terms of incarceration. Incarceration did nothing to help me cope with my disease. Only through treatment programs and a recovery community have I found relief and solutions.

During my days of active use I would personally consume between 3 and 5 grams of heroin/fentanyl on a daily basis. Under current statutes had I been arrested in possession of that amount I would have been charged with aggravated trafficking. Not only would I have been incarcerated for a considerable amount of time but would also have spent that time in an environment not conducive to treating my illness and ultimately be released still sick with many more barriers to a successful recovery plan due entirely to the record of the conviction.

Though this story is a theoretical one for me it is the current reality for many Mainers that are suffering with substance use disorder. If our ultimate goal is rehabilitation then we need to reevaluate our methods and implement evidence based strategies. This bill is an opportunity to do just that.

I appreciate your time and consideration. I hope you vote ought to pass. I am happy to answer any questions.

Thank you,
Ryan Paige