



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

2 STATE HOUSE STATION
AUGUSTA, MAINE 04333-0002
(207) 287-1440
TTY: (207) 287-4469

Jack Ducharme

34 Heald Street,
Madison, ME 04950
Residence: (207) 431-0775
Jack.Ducharme@legislature.maine.gov

Testimony in SUPPORT of
Presenting L.D. 2089, An Act to Require Schools to Provide Instruction Regarding
Prevention of the Illegal Use of Fentanyl and Other Drugs and Drug Poisoning Awareness
in Grades 6 to 12 and to Establish Drug Poisoning Awareness Week
Before the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee
Wednesday, January 24, 2024

Good morning, Senator Rafferty, Representative Brennan, and Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs. I am Representative Jack Ducharme and I have the privilege of representing the people of House District 71, which includes the towns of Madison, Norridgewock, and Cornville.

Maine has a drug problem. The Governor's Office released a Drug Overdose Report last year. In that report, her office confirmed 723 drug overdose deaths in Maine. Of those deaths, nearly 80 percent of confirmed fatal drug overdoses, according to the report, are attributable to fentanyl, either used on its own or in combination with other illicit drugs, such as cocaine, heroin, or methamphetamine. Her office stated, "Drug overdose deaths have increased dramatically across the country due to the increased prevalence of fentanyl, which has accounted for the majority of the nearly 108,000 drug overdoses recorded in the U.S, according to data from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control."

Our drug problem is out of control. Fentanyl is depriving families of their loved ones and destroying the lives of good people in our communities. Many of us have either lost someone to an overdose or know someone that has lost a loved one or friend to this horrific epidemic. Lives and families are torn apart from the tragedy of addiction.

That is why I am cosponsoring LD 2089 with my friend and colleague, Senator Brad Farrin. This bill aims to stop the problem before it even starts by educating children of the horror of addiction to these poisonous chemicals. We know that this education works to help Maine kids understand. We have Fire Prevention education in our schools and every kid in Maine knows about "Stop, drop and roll!" This bill establishes instruction frameworks for our schools to use to help our students understand the drivers of addiction and offers resources to help them deal with those drivers. It will bring awareness to the problem and provides strategies to prevent it. We



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

2 STATE HOUSE STATION
AUGUSTA, MAINE 04333-0002
(207) 287-1440
TTY: (207) 287-4469

Jack Ducharme

34 Heald Street,
Madison, ME 04950
Residence: (207) 431-0775
Jack.Ducharme@legislature.maine.gov

need to act early because this is about saving lives. We find time to educate our children in school about climate change. We MUST find time to teach them about drug poisoning!

I urge you all to support this bill.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Jack Ducharme", with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Rep. Jack Ducharme
Maine House District 71
Madison, Norridgewock, Cornville