



PENOBSCOT COUNTY
REGIONAL COMMUNICATIONS CENTER

Christopher J Lavoie
Director

Bradley B Fitzgerald
Deputy Director

To: Senator Pinny Beebe-Center
Representative Tavis Rock Hasenfus
Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety

From: Bradley Fitzgerald, Deputy Director of Penobscot Regional Communications Center

Re: Testimony in SUPPORT of LD 592, **An Act to Amend the Laws Governing the Crime of Endangering the Welfare of a Child**

Senator Beebe-Center, Representative Hasenfus, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety. My name is Bradley Fitzgerald. I am the Deputy Director of the Penobscot Regional Communications Center (PRCC). I am writing in support to LD 592.

Penobscot RCC is Maine's largest Public Safety Answering Point, handling over 65,000 E9-1-1 calls, nearly 400,000 administrative calls, and over 1.6 million radio transmissions annually. We dispatch for 66 Police, Fire, and EMS agencies in three different counties. We also handle landline and VoIP E9-1-1 calls for Aroostook County.

I have worked in public safety for nearly 20 years, which includes time in the fire service, law enforcement and the last 16 years working in 9-1-1 emergency communications. In 2018 I received a call from a frantic caller reporting they found their infant in the crib unresponsive. Nearly, 7 years later I can still hear the sound of the caller's voice as I attempted to instruct her through CPR instructions in an attempt to save the child's life. Unfortunately, the outcome was a devastating one and child's chance at life was taken from them. In my career I have taken hundreds of calls of this nature, but this one was different, this call cut deep, this call truly effected me and my career. This was the first call of this nature where I needed to end my shift and I needed to seek help. The days and weeks following this call I suffered wondering if I could have done more to help save the life of this baby.

Over the next several months, as I dealt with this burden my pain and grief turned to anger when I learned the parents of the infant left their fentanyl in reach of the child and the child become exposed and died of a fentanyl overdose. The anger grew as I looked back on this call and realized this information was never relayed to me from the caller and if they would have shared this information there were steps that could have been taken to save this child's life. Instead, they tried to hide this information to avoid the truth of what happened, which I believe robbed this child of a chance at life. As this case worked its way through the criminal justice process the anger never went away and it intensified as the individuals responsible, the parents, were not held accountable for their actions and because of the laws in place, essentially received a "slap" on the wrist.

I urge the members of this committee and our legislature to correct this. We need to hold those accountable for their actions, especially when it endangers the life of infants and children who can not speak for or defend

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themselves. In 2018 on that tragic night, conscious decisions were made to hide the true facts, facts that if presented could have changed the outcome with the help of 9-1-1 and emergency responders. I agree, tragedies happen, however when individuals don't take responsibility for their actions to try and avoid these tragedies, they need to be held accountable. The proposed changes in LD592 ought to pass.

Respectfully submitted,

Bradley Fitzgerald

Bradley Fitzgerald
Deputy Director
Penobscot Regional Communications Center

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