

Testimony in Opposition of LD 1024

An Act to Expand the List of Crimes That Do Not Qualify for Immunity Under Maine's Good Samaritan Laws Concerning Drug-Related Medical Assistance

March 28, 2025

Senator Beebe-Center, Representative Hasenfus, and Honorable Members of the Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety:

My name is Courtney Meade, and I am writing to express my strong opposition to LD 1024.

As a person in long-term recovery, a community organizer/advocate, a student in my senior year of the Mental Health and Human Services program and graduate of the Substance Abuse Rehabilitation Technician certificate program at the University of Maine at Augusta- I have seen firsthand how critical Good Samaritan protections are in saving lives. In fact- prior to my recovery, I have personally been protected under Maine's Good Samaritan law. As a result, I was able to call for help during an overdose-because of that protection, a life was saved. This is harm reduction in action, and it works.

LD 1024 threatens to reverse hard-earned gains made through supportive, community-focused responses to substance use- progress made possible by Maine's current Good Samaritan law. By excluding certain offenses from Good Samaritan protections, this bill reinforces the outdated criminal model of addiction-a model that has historically led to higher incarceration rates, increased recidivism, and repeated cycles of criminalization that greatly elevate the risk of fatal overdose. Harm reduction, in contrast, prioritizes public health, dignity, and safety, promotes trust-building, and ultimately- creates space for recovery to begin.

The initial 24 to 48 hours following a nonfatal overdose are critical for engaging individuals in treatment and support services. Prompt engagement from trained professionals- such as behavioral health providers, peer recovery coaches, or substance abuse counselors- during this window can greatly improve recovery outcomes- but that chance begins with a call for help.

I urge you to oppose LD 1024. We need to move forward with policies rooted in evidence-based care, harm reduction, and compassion- not systems proven ineffective, which are driven by fear and control instead of support and healing.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Courtney Meade
Bucksport, Maine