

Sharon Bailey  
Jefferson  
LD 1024  
03/30/25

Honorable members of the Criminal Justice Committee,

My name is Sharon Bailey. I live in Jefferson, and I am writing to express my strong opposition to LD 1024. This bill seeks to roll back the protections of Maine's Expanded Good Samaritan Law by adding new crimes to the list of offenses that individuals can be charged with at the scene of an overdose.

I am a grieving mom. My only child and son, Matthew died on September 7, 2012 to an accidental heroin overdose. Since his death, I have become active in supporting others who grieve the loss loved ones due to overdose or substance use disorder (SUD) through my grief support groups. I am also an advocate for people in recovery or active addiction. By sharing Matthew's story, my hope is to fight stigma, help bring about awareness to mental health and SUD, and to influence change. My passion is fueled by the need to bring honor and a voice to my son, and to all who have died or suffer from SUD in our state, because these lives, I feel, are considered meaningless by many. I know the unimaginable pain that families feel after losing a loved one from overdose, and how they wished that they could have been saved. Every life matters!

The need for strong, broad protections under the Good Samaritan Law cannot be overstated. Overdose deaths have only recently begun to decline, and we must not take a step backward by discouraging people from seeking life-saving assistance. LD 1024 threatens to dismantle these protections by expanding the list of crimes that can be charged at the scene of an overdose. The risk is clear: if more people are afraid to call 9-1-1, more Mainers will die unnecessarily from preventable overdoses. This could be your loved one entrapped in this situation!

My son was faced with this fear of calling 9-1-1. On the night of Matthew's death, his fiancée (who also died from a heroin overdose less than 3 months later) was awakened to his struggled breathing sounds. She was able to arouse him enough so that he could speak. He told her that he thought that he was overdosing and to call 9-1-1. Before she could call, there were phone calls made to a couple of so-called friends (I found this out months later). Matthew and his fiancée decided that they would sit up for a while on the couch and watch TV, and declined to call 9-1-1. I believe that this call did not happen because they were afraid of being arrested and prosecuted. Matthew could still be alive today if there had been less focus on punishment and more emphasis on saving lives.

I urge this committee to stand firm in its commitment to saving lives by rejecting LD 1024. The Good Samaritan Law was enacted to encourage people to seek medical help without fear of prosecution. We must protect this progress and ensure that every person in Maine feels safe calling 9-1-1 in an emergency. The intent should be to prioritize saving lives and protecting the health of Mainers over punitive measures!

Thank you again for your time and attention to this bill. I would be willing to answer questions if you have any.

Sincerely,  
Sharon Bailey

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