



Testimony in Opposition of LD 1024:

Act to Expand the List of Crimes That Do Not Qualify for Immunity Under Maine's Good Samaritan Laws

March 31, 2025

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

My name is Catherine Rawson, and I am the Communications & Outreach Coordinator for the Maine Recovery Hub at Portland Recovery Community Center. I am here today to express Portland Recovery Community Center's strong opposition to LD 1024. Every second matters in an overdose situation—a simple phone call can mean the difference between life and death. Our organization urges you to reject this dangerous bill, which would remove protections from Maine's Good Samaritan Law by adding additional crimes to the list of offenses that individuals can be charged with when calling for assistance for a suspected drug-related overdose.

I would not be here today if someone else had not called 9-1-1 to save my life 15 years ago. I then moved to Maine in 2010 seeking treatment, and today, I am a mother, wife, and woman in long-term recovery from substance use disorder. I have the privilege of seeing people rebuild their lives every day at Portland Recovery Community Center, where we are committed to providing support, education, resources, and advocacy for people recovering from and affected by addiction. We regularly dispense and train community members on how to use Narcan, a life-saving medication that can reverse opioid overdoses. We proudly let people know that Maine has one of the strongest Good Samaritan laws in the country. We tell our community that no one should be afraid to reach out for help.

It is essential to maintain the effective protections of Maine's Good Samaritan Law. With overdose deaths only recently starting to decline, we cannot afford to reverse progress by creating barriers that discourage people from taking life-saving measures. LD 1024 reintroduces the fear of criminal charges for people calling 9-1-1 for medical help. This is a direct contradiction to the very purpose of the Good Samaritan Law—saving lives. If more people are afraid to call 9-1-1, more Mainers will die from preventable overdoses.

We must not turn back now. Portland Recovery Community Center urges this committee to stand firm in its commitment to public safety and protecting people by rejecting LD 1024.

Thank you for your time, and I would be happy to answer any questions.

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