



Rachel Talbot Ross
Senator, District 28

THE MAINE SENATE
132nd Legislature

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Augusta, Maine 04333

***Testimony of Senator Rachel Talbot Ross in opposition to
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”***

*Before the Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety
March 31, 2025*

Senator Beebe-Center, Representative Hasenfus, and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety, I am Senator Rachel Talbot Ross. I represent Senate District 28, which includes part of Portland and Peaks Island. I am writing to you today in strong opposition to 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*.

Three years ago, this Legislature made a critical decision—to prioritize saving lives by enacting one of the strongest Good Samaritan laws in the nation. In the face of an unrelenting opioid crisis, we acted to ensure that people feel safe calling 9-1-1 in the event of an overdose. Last session, we rejected LD 714, a bill that sought to weaken these life-saving protections. Today, we must be equally clear: LD 1024 is yet another direct threat to the progress we have made in preventing fatal overdoses.

Good Samaritan laws save lives—this is not opinion but fact. The U.S. Government Accountability Office, after analyzing 17 studies, found a consistent pattern: states with strong Good Samaritan laws experience lower opioid-related overdose death rates¹. The law we enacted was carefully designed to remove the fear of criminal prosecution as a barrier to seeking emergency help. LD 1024 undermines that clarity and weakens the very purpose of this policy. In an overdose situation, every second counts. We cannot afford to let hesitation cost lives.

It is also important to emphasize that our current Good Samaritan law already excludes immunity for those committing crimes against children, sex crimes, and other violent offenses. We have these safeguards in place. Expanding the list further does not enhance public safety—it only increases the risk that someone will die because bystanders are too afraid to call for help. The price of this legislation will be paid in human lives: our family members, friends, and neighbors.

We have a responsibility to ensure that Mainers suffering from substance use disorder (SUD) have the chance to survive. Our focus must remain on saving lives, not instilling fear. For these reasons, I strongly urge this committee to reject LD 1024 and reaffirm our commitment to prioritizing public health and safety.

Thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration.

Rachel Talbot Ross
State Senator, District 28
Representing part of Portland and Peaks Island

¹ U.S. Government Accountability Office: Most States Have Good Samaritan Laws and Research Indicates They May Have Positive Effects. (2021) <https://www.gao.gov/products/gao-21-248>