

Senator Beebe-Center, Representative Hasenfus, and honorable members of the Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice & Public Safety:

I submit this written testimony in support of LD1646 “An Act to Amend Maine’s Good Samaritan Laws Regarding Suspected Drug-related Overdoses.” to share my lived experience as an affected other.

My name is Crystal Love. I am a State of Maine-certified Recovery Coach, Behavior Integration Specialist, Trauma Educator, and 1300HR Kripalu Yoga Teacher. Most importantly, I am a person in long-term recovery.

I know firsthand how trauma can push people to numb pain simply to survive—and how survival can quietly turn into another form of captivity. That is why recovery is so powerful. It doesn’t break just one cycle; it breaks many. Recovery reaches into families, relationships, and communities, not just individuals.

For six and a half years, I was in a relationship with someone in active opioid addiction.

Before addiction, my former partner was a middle and high school lacrosse coach whose teams won championships. He was deeply invested in young people and an active, respected member of his community. He was a state professional powerlifting champion, a student, and a personal trainer. He was healthy, disciplined, and strong. He was kind.

What people did not see was the grief he carried after the suicide of his best friend. He did not have meaningful access to mental health resources to help him process that loss. Opioid's entered his life. His addiction moved fast. The person I once knew did not slowly fade away—he disappeared in what felt like a blink of an eye.

There were nights I wasn’t sure he would survive until morning. I carried Narcan everywhere and used it more than a dozen times in just three months to save his life.

During that same season, I lost my cousin to overdose—someone brilliant and deeply loved. He graduated at the top of his class from the University of Vermont’s engineering program. He was thoughtful, curious, and generous with both his mind and his heart. He had a future filled with possibility. His death was not a reflection of who he was- it was the result of an illness that took him far too soon.

These experiences broke me open. They were some of the darkest days of my life.

I have done deep work in Al-Anon and I have learned that I did not cause addiction, I cannot control it, and I cannot cure it. And, when someone you love may die, these principles collide with reality.

For years, I stayed closer than was healthy because I believed my presence might be the difference between life and death. The pressure to remain in proximity to addiction in order to save a life is immense —especially when legal protections feel unclear.

As an affected other, I want to be clear about something that is often misunderstood. I never used drugs. And yet, for more than six years, addiction governed my life. The responsibility and fear of being the one to intervene when his life was at risk lived with me every day.

After many overdoses, and after we were living apart, there was one particularly severe episode. At the time, we were mostly no-contact. We had agreed for him to have an overnight visit with my service dog. When my dog did not return the next morning, I knew something was wrong.

I requested a welfare check and was told no one was home. Hours passed, and the fear grew.

Eventually, I made the decision to enter the apartment through an unlocked window. Inside, I found him unconscious, his skin discolored, and my dog laying beside him. I called 911 immediately. I administered Narcan twice and he was still unresponsive. Even as I was trying to save his life, I was afraid—afraid of being blamed, afraid of the substances present, afraid that entering the apartment would somehow make me responsible for what was happening. That fear is not unique to me. It lives inside many affected others, and it is exactly what causes hesitation in moments where seconds matter.

Paramedics were able to revive him. Doctors later confirmed the extent of the damage caused by delayed medical care. The delay in medical care resulted in paralysis, stroke and permanent cognitive and motor functioning. I later learned that the people he had been using with had left him there without calling for help. He was unconscious for approximately sixteen hours without medical attention, resulting in kidney failure, traumatic brain injury, and a seven-day stay in the ICU.

I have seen what happens when fear keeps people from calling for help and I have also seen what happens when someone does. I believe deeply that people want to do the right thing. When fear is removed and clarity replaces confusion, compassion rises—and lives are saved.

The Good Samaritan Law exists because people should never have to choose between saving a life and protecting themselves. When the law is confusing or narrowly interpreted, fear fills the gap. This is why clarity matters.

In Maine, overdose emergencies are not rare or isolated events. Each year, thousands of people—friends, partners, family members, and bystanders—are forced to decide in real time whether to call for help. When legal protection hinges on technicalities or specific language, confusion and hesitation are inevitable.

LD1646 strengthens the intent of the Good Samaritan Law. It makes the law reflect the reality of overdose response. It protects not only people who use substances, but also the loved ones who are often the first—and only—responders.

Recovery takes courage. It takes support. And it takes policies that reflect reality—not perfection.

Recovery is alive in Maine. I am living proof of that. With clarity, compassion, and courage in our laws, more people will have the chance to live. LD 1646 create space for people to act in the moments that matter most. They give people the chance to survive, to heal, and to find their way back.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Crystal Love

Loveinmvmt Living LLC.
KYIS Certified, CASEL | SEL 1300 HR RYT, Kripalu Yoga Teacher
State of Maine Recovery Coach, NARM Practitioner
Survivor-Advocate

Crystal Love
Islesboro
LD 1646

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