

April 10th, 2023

Good afternoon, Senator Rafferty, Representative Brennan, and members of the Education committee, My name is Esperanza Rodriguez. I am 14 years old and a member of the ME-RAP Augusta youth caucus. I have been a part of this group for about 2 years and am a youth impacted by substance use. I also helped film, direct, and star in the recovery and youth in Maine short film. The same summer we went to the state house for a learning experience on the process of passing the bill. While we were visiting the state house, me and the youth of the Augusta caucus worked together to create a mock up bill, after a few minutes we decided on a mock up bill, many youth had expressed that they have had several friends even their own family members that had overdosed leaving them scared and clueless on what they should do. After we decided on our mock up bill we went through the process of passing the bill, they let us youth testify for the bill and testify against the bill, after this we went to meet with the Governor to discuss our mock up bill

I am here to testify in favor of LD 1315. I am testifying in favor of this bill because I believe that everyone should know what to do if a friend or family member overdoses, teaching youth at a young age how to administer Narcan along with required first aid can save lives in the future or present. People may think it's useless for kids in Highschool to learn how to administer Narcan, but you never know when they may encounter someone who is overdosed, knowing how to properly administer Narcan can save that's persons life , you may be saying to yourself "well what about an ambulance?"

A lot of times by the time a person who has overdosed is found their breathing has stopped and they only have so much time before it's too late, in the few minutes it takes an ambulance to arrive it could be too late for that person, so in those few minutes a person who has Narcan training could a save a life of an overdose victim.

I recently learned how to use Narcan this year and regret I didn't learn sooner, when I was about 9 years old my uncle over dosed although I wasn't present when this happened, what if I was? What if I was by myself with an overdosed uncle dead on the floor? What would I do? What could I do if I had no training? Even though I wasn't present I could have been.

Narcan saved my uncle's life, he was treated with it before the ambulance arrived and it saved his life. I'm sure several people and parents are concerned about if their child or children missused Narcan or used it on themselves, but Narcan is harmless if used on a person who has not overdosed. I would also make it very clear that just because we are providing people with Narcan does not mean we are giving people an

excuse to use or take drugs, it means we want to insure teens that they will have the proper training to save a family members life. **This bill also**

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**requires prevention education in Maine's high schools. I believe every parent and child should know what prevention means.** A lot of times people think prevention is simply telling kids "don't do drugs" or "drugs are bad" although this is accurate and important, I believe if kids knew what happens when u take drugs they will be less likely to use and will know the dangerous of using, like how drugs seem so fun at first and how people will say stuff like "just try it once it won't hurt just this one" or "everyone does it" I feel like if we told kids about how people will make drugs sound fun and exciting they will be less likely to fall into the temptation of using if they realized the consequences of drugs and the affect it can have on those they love. Currently 2% of the world is addicted to drugs or alcohol, that doesn't seem like a lot but reaiily if u think about how many people are in the world it is a lot. One of my favorite quotes is " every addict was once a child" it really makes you think, that person was once a child, a normal child ,they may have not known yet what drugs were or maybe they were already using, either way it could have all changed just by telling them what drugs are and why you shouldn't use, it could have all changed just by sitting down and listening to their questions and answering them. It could have all changed, prevention has a different meaning for everyone that's why we should all share our opinions and talk about it . Ask a child what prevention means to them it could change your life.