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Senator, District 15

THE MAINE SENATE
131st Legislature

3 State House Station
Augusta, Maine 04333

Senator Matt Pouliot

Sponsor of

LD 1315, “An Act to Require Instruction in Schools on Substance Use Prevention and Administration of Naloxone Hydrochloride”

Good Afternoon Senator Rafferty, Representative Brennan, and members of the Educational and Cultural Affairs Committee, I am Senator Matt Pouliot and I have the honor of representing Senate District 15, including the towns of Augusta; Belgrade; China; Mount Vernon; Sidney; and Vassalboro. I am here today to present LD 1315, “An Act to Require Instruction in Schools on Substance Use Prevention and Administration of Naloxone Hydrochloride.”

This bill requires secondary schools to annually provide students with an age-appropriate instructional program on the use and misuse of drugs and controlled substances, the dangers of substance use, and substance use prevention. The instructional program must include a component on providing appropriate assistance to an overdose victim, including training in how to administer an opioid antidote, such as naloxone.

Naloxone (also known as brand name Narcan) is a safe and effective medication designed to reverse symptoms of an opioid overdose, such as slowed breathing, discolored skin, or unresponsiveness. Naloxone is FDA-approved for all ages. The unfortunate truth is that opioid addiction has reached epidemic proportions, crosses into all segments of our society, and has touched many of our families. Young people across Maine witness substance use by their parents, older siblings, and classmates. They often are the only ones home when a crisis occurs. It is better to prepare the youth to administer this simple nasal spray and call 911 than let their parents, friends, or community members die in front of their eyes.

This legislation is being proposed by youth who are experiencing substance use in their families. This same group of youth as part of the Maine Recovery Advocacy Project will be advocating for the passage of this legislation, some of whom you will hear from today.

It all began last summer when this group of young people joined me for a day at the State House to learn how their government works. During that trip they were also helping to film, direct, and edit a movie about their experiences growing up impacted by substance use. That movie was recently released and the group has been hosting movie screenings across Maine. During the movie, I asked them what bill they would create if they could. They learned how proposed legislation is written and voted into law during this workshop. Now, hopefully, these young people will see their piece of proposed legislation become a reality.

I am happy to answer any questions your committee may have.