

**“An Act to Amend the Laws Governing the Crime of Endangering the Welfare of a Child”
Before the Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety**

Public Hearing Date: March 17, 2025

Testimony neither in support or opposition of LD 592

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

My name is Brent Beaulieu. I am a lieutenant with the Bangor Police Department and I currently supervise the Criminal Investigation Division. I am here today to provide brief examples of what the officers and detectives of the police department have experienced related to the ingestion of Fentanyl by very young children in our community.

On May 8, 2022, Bangor Police were dispatched to a reported overdose. Upon arrival, the officers found a mother holding a 2-year-old unconscious child. The child was extremely pale and her face was blue. The mother informed the officers that her child had gotten into her Fentanyl and had not been breathing just prior to the arrival of the officers. She stated that the child had been in an upstairs bedroom.

In the bedroom, officers found there was a partially eaten dinner on the bed as well as tin foil and small chunks of Fentanyl. In the living room, officers noticed a vial of heroin sitting on an end table near the couch.

This mother was upfront about what her child had ingested. I have found this is the exception, as responding officers are usually confronted with deception, delaying life saving measures that could have an immediate effect on the outcome for these children.

On June 22, 2022, Bangor Police responded to a report of a 10-month-old that had ingested Ibuprofen. The mother of this child reported that the child had been changing colors, her eyes had rolled back into her head and she had got limp. Upon arrival, officers found an extremely lethargic 10-month-old. The parents of this child produced a half empty bottle of Ibuprofen.

The child was taken to the hospital by ambulance and once administered Narcan, the child responded positively to this. Learning of this, the father disappeared from the hospital and sent a text to the mother stating that the child had overdosed on Fentanyl.

A search warrant on the residence located Fentanyl there. Search warrant on the parents' phones showed that the father had sent text messages early on indicating that this was an overdose and that they should have given the child Narcan. The messages also showed that the parents were very active in the distribution of narcotics from that residence.

In both of these examples the children ultimately survived, this is not always the case.

On October 18, 2018, Bangor Police responded to a report of an unresponsive 1-year old girl. Arriving officers found that the child had no pulse and performed CPR on the child until paramedics arrived. The child did not survive this incident. The parents initially reported that the child had just received a round

of vaccines and they were adamant that they felt the vaccines were the cause of the child's death. Toxicology would later show that the child died of a Fentanyl overdose.

The investigation revealed that the parents were actively using narcotics with the children present. The father admitted to shooting up in the car with his children in the vehicle with him. Drug paraphernalia was scattered within the vehicle amongst the children. It was also common for the mother to transport illegal narcotics hidden inside her bra.

Although this child died, Manslaughter was unable to be charged as there was no way to prove beyond a reasonable doubt which parents' actions led to the death of the child. Misdemeanor charges of endangering the welfare of a child were brought, as it was clear both parents had endangered the children repeatedly, but there was no applicable felony level charge available.

These are but three examples. Outcomes may be different in each but the one common similarity is that these children were injured by a lackadaisical attitude regarding the use and storage of deadly narcotics by the individuals responsible for protecting these vulnerable victims.

This issue continues, just two days ago, a 3 year old presented at NLEMMC with Fentanyl and Cocaine in her blood.

Thank you.