



City of Brewer Police Department

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Senator Bebee-Center, Representative Hasenfus, and Honorable Members of the Committee Criminal Justice and Public Safety:

This testimony is in support of the passage of 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".

We recognize and support the intent of the Good Samaritan Law, to encourage people to call for life saving resources on behalf of someone experiencing an overdose. The priority for all first responders, including law enforcement, is always preservation of life first.

Under our existing Good Samaritan Law there is no mechanism to deal with traffickers and illegal firearms offenses at an overdose scene. People that are involved in the trafficking of dangerous drugs, like fentanyl, are the very same people that are providing drugs leading to life threatening overdoses. Those involved with trafficking, particularly large amounts, are also involved in illegal firearm possession. Our Good Samaritan Law should not provide shelter to those who engage in behaviors that threaten the safety of the public and the lives of those we seek to save under the Good Samaritan Law.

Maine's Good Samaritan law was championed by organizations and lobbyists whose collective platform was to ultimately decriminalize all drug possession and have safe injection sites. After its initial passage, these same groups promoted Maine's Good Samaritan law as "Maine has the strongest Good Samaritan Law in the Nation". I would submit to you that we have one of most permissive Good Samaritan laws in the country.

Good Samaritan laws should be designed to encourage people to seek help to save lives, but they most certainly should not insulate drug traffickers from prosecution. These are the very people that are actively peddling this poison that is robbing us of so many precious lives.

Even though fatal overdoses have somewhat reduced, non-fatal overdoses are skyrocketing. Drug supply is plentiful meeting the demand. Organized crime is



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now bringing these deadly drugs to Maine, and with the influx of organized crime we invariably encounter weapons and violence.

We want to disrupt supply, hold traffickers accountable, and ensure that firearms aren't in hands of people who are prohibited by law.

This bill still offers robust protections for people who actively use drugs and call for help in the event of an overdose. We are simply strengthening the law to ensure drug dealers and firearm offenses are not given a free pass.

As this committee deliberates on this bill, I would respectfully ask you to consider the following public policy questions:

- Is having one of the most permissive Good Samaritan laws in the nation making communities and people safer? Does it reduce supply or demand?
- Should the people that sell and supply deadly illicit drugs like fentanyl, where there is a high likelihood of overdose, be exempt from prosecution at an overdose call?
- Does weapon possession by prohibited persons, particularly if under the influence of mind-altering drugs represent a significant threat to public safety?

We believe that holding people who supply deadly drugs accountable will save lives. We believe that prosecuting prohibited persons for firearms offenses will save lives. We believe that if this bill is enacted we will have safer and healthier communities.

Respectfully submitted,

Chief Christopher M. Martin

Brewer Police Department