

Larry Dansinger
Bangor

May 9, 2021

To members of the Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee,

I am writing in support of LD 1675, An Act To Amend Certain Provisions of Maine's Drug Laws.

I do not believe locking people up benefits public safety. Punishment does not teach a positive lesson. It damages those who are locked up, making them more likely to be charged with (and sometimes commit) other acts considered criminal. It does not provide helpful closure for many who are the victims of crime. It is expensive and takes money away from public health and other programs that can more effectively address public safety needs such as mental health support, substance use disorder programs, poverty alleviation, and insuring adequate health care and economic security, among others.

Substance use disorder and any situation where an individual has a dependent relationship to drugs is a public health problem. It should not be a legal issue. To the extent that it is, the more harshly it is treated, the less the problem can be solved through public health measures.

The current law defines drug “trafficking” in a way that is too broad. It punishes many for possessing an amount that is for their personal use, not for sale to anyone else. Drug possession should be decriminalized (LD 967), and trafficking should be more narrowly defined to require an amount that is significantly more than an amount for personal use.

Our goal in Maine should be a state with healthy people. Incarcerating people with small amounts of drugs will not do that, because those with substance use disorder need treatment, not jailing, to heal themselves and address any substance use dependencies.

Please vote ought to pass on LD 1675.

Sincerely,

Larry Dansinger
21 Mount Desert Drive
Bangor, ME 04401
(207) 262-3706 or larryd@myfairpoint.net