

Maine PRISONER ADVOCACY Coalition



Peter M. Lehman, PhD
20 Lawrence Ave.
Thomaston, Maine 04861
(207) 542-1496
Peter@GrowInME.com

Testimony in Support of LD 1675 to the Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety May 14, 2021

Senator Deschambault, Representative Warren, and distinguished members of the Committees.

My name is Peter Lehman and I live in Thomaston. I am a formerly incarcerated citizen and a person in long-term recovery.* I am testifying on behalf of the Maine Prisoner Advocacy Coalition whose goal is to promote restorative practices in order to increase public safety and the health of our community.

It is a crime in Maine to sell liquor without a license. (see Title 28-A, Part 1, Cheers, 1, §1)

How much beer, wine and liquor would you have to have for us to assume that you were illegally selling alcohol? Trafficking?

Think about it. If you filled your car and compounded your offense by transporting it from New Hampshire to Maine? If you filled a trailer?

How about if you filled your basement or garage with cases of liquor?

Should we send an officer to give you citation or haul you to jail?

How much would you have to possess for us to infer that you are committing the criminal act of selling alcohol. That's a question: is there any amount?

My answer is no. what about you?

I would want to see some other evidence of selling, like the posters or flyers you circulated in the neighborhood or the sign out in front of your house or observing sales.

* In the interest of honesty and disclosure, a personal background statement is available on request.

You already know what I am getting at. No amount by itself would be sufficient. **We would want the actual elements of the crime pled and proven.**

As we do with this proposed change to the trafficking statute.

As it stands, the trafficking statute is a dream creation of a lazy prosecutor or attorney general who wanted to run up her body count of convictions and to give the illusion that they were doing something about the drug problem.

There is **absolutely NO evidence** that this trafficking statute ever successfully reduced drug use or solved any drug problem.

But there is **abundant evidence that this trafficking statute cost us a LOT of money** paying for policing and imprisoning traffickers for obscene amounts of time.

And compounding those costs as a result of the "crack scare" that made it even easier to convict and give enhanced sentences to users or cocaine base.

Again, with **no evidence** of successfully reducing drug trafficking and drug use.

PLEASE support LD 1675 to increase justice and save money.

Thank you for your attention and support.

I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.