

Sharon Bailey
Jefferson
LD 1862

Dear Criminal Justice & Public Safety Committee,

My name is Sharon Bailey and I support LD 1862 for many reasons. I will share why:

I lost my only child, my son Matthew on September 7, 2012 to an accidental heroin overdose. At that time, the Good Samaritan law was not in place. My son was with his fiancé at the time of his heroin use on this day. When she heard him struggling to breathe, she was able to rouse him to consciousness. Matt told her that he thought he was overdosing and to call 911. She called a couple friends first for help. After the conversations, Matt told her to NOT call 911. Instead, they went downstairs to "sit up" on the couch watching TV, thinking they had the situation under control. His fiancé fell asleep. When she woke up he was blue and unresponsive. She then called 911. He was taken to the hospital by ambulance, but didn't survive.

Some time prior to his passing, Matthew had been in jail for a short time. Upon his release, I remember his words clearly, "I am never going back to jail". I truly believe that Matt was afraid of this outcome at the time of his overdose. His fear of going to jail outweighed the call for help.

Since his passing, I began a grief support group in Augusta through GRASP (Grief Recovery After A Substance Passing) for anyone who needs grief support after losing a loved one to overdose or substance related causes. I am also an administrator for ME Team Sharing, a Facebook group created to support parents who have lost children due to SUD (Substance Use Disorder). Through my personal loss and the losses felt by individuals in these groups, I know the devastation of losing a loved one, especially a child, and the effects on families. We need the change by passing LD 1862 to help people in overdose situations. There should never be a hesitancy to call for help. The lives of people living with SUD depend on it. Their lives mattered and they all are someone's child!

There is nothing more that I want, other than wishing I could have my son back, than doing what I can to help save the lives of others who are faced with the same situation that Matt did during his overdose. The devastation and stigma of losing a loved one/child in this way is not something I would wish on my worst enemy! How would you feel if it was your child?

Thank you for your consideration,
Sharon Bailey