

Senator Deschambault, Representative Warren and distinguished members of the Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety, thank you for reading this statement in support of LD1862 An Act to Strengthen Maine's Good Samaritan Law Concerning Drug-Related Medical Assistance. My name is Craig Cardamone, I am a licensed marriage and family therapist and I reside in Portland, Maine. I value this opportunity to discuss what this bill will do for people who are at the scene of an overdose and want to save their loved ones.

Due to HIPAA and a great desire to protect my client's identities and stories, I cannot provide actual accounts. However, I will provide general scenarios that have come up while working with clients and in conversations with my colleagues. In my work I have encountered people who have been at the scene of an overdose and were afraid that if someone called for help, they would get prosecuted just for being there. These fears are founded, as I have had clients who were charged with federal offenses for being at the scene of an overdose. As the law currently stands, only people who are protected from prosecution are the person who is experiencing an overdose and the person who calls for help. This has huge implications for the rest of their lives, as it can affect their housing, employment, and ability to get a higher education from federal student loans. One of the most overlooked implications of someone being prosecuted for being at the scene of an overdose is the emotional trauma they endure. Ultimately, people should not have to choose between potentially saving their loved one's life or possibly being arrested just for being at the scene of an overdose.

I support this bill because I believe we can increase our ability to save lives and empower people to help their loved ones who are experiencing an overdose. If we actually want to help people, we need to take this step. Thank you for your time and please support this bill.