

Good evening, I'm Matt Gunn. A person in long-term recovery and an interest in criminal justice reform. I self medicated with drugs for a number of years for a neurological condition. Then my 14 year old brother passed away suddenly and my family split apart. Dealing with the grief my drug use spiraled.

One evening I used opiates with a friend and the batch was stronger than I thought. My friend who had known me for years was helpless while my breathing became shallow and I turned purple. He was struck with fear and considered calling for help but knew if he did our livelihood and housing were at risk. After a short period somehow my breathing returned and I regained consciousness. Like many people I didn't intend to overdose that night but many people don't get a second chance.

We have to expand this law so people don't have to choose between calling emergency services and risking prosecution. I ask that the state expand its good samaritan law to shield all of those at the scene of an overdose from criminal prosecution for non-violent offenses. Because even the risk of incarceration can be a death sentence- It nearly was for me when my friend was too scared to call for emergency services.

Our prisons are filled with working class people convicted on low-level drug charges, but they did not create this problem. Criminalization dooms many into an unending cycle of poverty-wages and re-incarceration. I was almost caught in that cycle myself. We can no longer target working Mainers for a crisis they didn't start while drug companies and the carceral system profit off of their misery.

Nothing we do can bring back those we have lost- the question is now how to move forward. LD 1862, The Expansion of the Good Samaritan law will protect Mainers who save lives, providing a loved one, a brother or a dear friend with another chance at life.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Matt Gunn

Freeport

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LD 1862

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