

Senator Diamond, Representative Corey, and Honorable members of the Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety: My name is Ricky S. Higgins, I am a resident of Mountain View Correctional Facility in Charleston, Maine and I am writing to testify in favor of LD-1862. Expanding the Good Samaritan Law will save lives.

I was an occasional drug user, and was under the influence of alcohol, Xanax, and heroin/fentanyl at the time, trying anything to curb my dreadful depression. I woke up hearing the most terrifying noise that I had ever heard in my life. The noise of someone taking their last breaths. I immediately started performing CPR (At the time I was basic first aid & CPR certified), to no avail. My first instinct should have been to call 911, but I knew people that had gotten into trouble for being in situations such as this, getting blamed for someone passing away. I had an active probation warrant for my arrest due to failing to report on time. I knew that if I called emergency services, the police were sure to come as well, and arrest me, likely charging me with the death of one of my best friends.

After moments of indecision, I knew something had to be done. I told my mother to call 911 and told her, my little brother, and my little sister that I was so sorry, and I ran. I ended up getting arrested several days later for my probation warrant.

No one should ever be too scared to call for help in what is in many cases the most terrifying and vulnerable moment in someone's life. I hold more regret and guilt in my heart than anyone could ever place upon me through a prison sentence. The fact that I was too scared to make the call because I feared negative repercussion in the form of a felony conviction is beyond wrong. I lost one of my best friends right in front of me, and hesitated for just moments too long, and when I finally decided that the call needed to be made, I had my mother do it and then ran because I feared the police knowing that I too was using, feared prosecution for every single charge that I was indicted on, and feared getting in trouble for a close friend dying in front of my eyes.

Please support LD1862 to expand the Good Samaritan Law in the State of Maine so others will not hesitate to call 911 when their friends are in crisis.

Sincerely,

Ricky S. Higgins II

[Sisters Phone # 207-330-1008]