

Roxanne Kai  
Woodstock/Maine Peoples Alliance  
LD 1862

Senator Deschambault, Representative Warren, and honorable members of the Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety: my name is Roxy Kai, I am a resident of Woodstock and I am here today to testify in favor of LD 1862.

I want to paint you a picture: friends are hanging out. Everything is fine, and then all of a sudden it isn't. Someone used drugs and is experiencing an overdose. They say that the room is spinning and they can't control their shaking. Their heart is beating so fast it feels like it's pounding out of their chest. They can't get enough air but are telling folks not to call 911 because they don't want anyone else to get in trouble. They don't want to get in trouble: they know what happens if you have a criminal record. Instead, they decide to lay down to ride it out. Maybe they get up later, maybe they don't: but nobody calls for help because they fear being criminalized themselves.

I've seen this picture. We are surrounded by loved ones - family, friends, and neighbors - who are struggling and scared. These are people who need or want help but are afraid of having a criminal record that would haunt them for the rest of their lives - even when they do enter long term recovery. Even when in recovery, this record can follow them like a ball and chain attached to their ankles. This ball holds them back, reading: no employment, no housing, no forgiveness.

Expanding the Good Samaritan law will save lives. It will allow people to feel safe in calling for help when someone is experiencing an overdose and needs medical assistance. Expanding the Good Samaritan law will take away the fear from so many people. This bill will make it easier for individuals to do the right thing - saving lives - without worrying that they might be ruining their own life in the process.

LD 1862 reads forgiveness, help, compassion, safety net, and hope for a future... more lives will be saved because they won't fear for their future.

Thank you for taking the time to hear my testimony and I am asking that this committee please votes ought to pass on LD 1862 to save lives.