

Jeanne Marquis
China
LD 1862

To the members of the Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety:

I am one of the lucky ones because my family member with substance use disorder is alive today, even though I came very close to losing him. He was revived by strangers but not one of them called 911 because of their fear of incrimination.

There are 636 families who lost their loved one to overdose last year in the state of Maine. That number should horrify us all. It's been increasing over the last several years. What we are doing is not working. We need to support LD1862: An act to strengthen Maine's Good Samaritan Law to shield everyone at the scene of an overdose from arrest or prosecution for all non-violent crimes, probation and bail condition violations.

Governor Mills has argued that people who do not call 911 should be punished. She clearly does not understand that the bystanders at an overdose are already in fear of incrimination. More fear will not save more lives. Don't make them have to choose to forfeit their own futures, custody of their children, their housing or their livelihoods.

Some opponents of LD1862 may say that expanding the Good Sam Law will not allow officers to act on information gathered at the site of an overdose. We all want drugs off the street, but odds are the people at the scene of an overdose are not the big time drug dealers you are targeting. These are people struggling with substance use disorder who we need to keep alive long enough to get them into recovery. Fear will not save lives, building trust will.

Please vote to pass LD1862.

Sincerely,

Jeanne Marquis
China, Maine