

Gina Morin
Auburn
LD 1862

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

We are losing 12 friends and family members each week to preventable overdose. One of them could have been my partner. She could have been left alone to die due to someone's fear of calling 911 and that is not acceptable. I can't imagine all those families who got that call they were dreading. The call that their loved one wasn't ever coming home because someone was too fearful of getting arrested to call 911.

Some folks may oppose this bill in the name of public safety. I think this is a great bill precisely because it gives everyone a chance to participate in keeping the public safe. We all can have a stake in caring for our neighbors. Drugs have been on the streets since the dawn of time and that's never going to change as long as Maine has folks who are suffering with trauma. As a former corrections officer, I've seen folks who were arrested and forced to detox in a cell and without any medical attention. That is not just dangerous, it is also inhumane. The war on people is not working and I want to save lives.

People who are present at a drug overdose have to make a split-second decision weighing all possible harms to themselves and others. They may worry about being arrested, getting evicted, breaking up their families, losing their job. We need to send as strong a message as possible that they will be protected for protecting others. Don't you think as a community we should shoulder this responsibility?

The one way we can be sure that folks get the help they need when they're suffering an overdose, without throwing other people's lives into chaos, is by passing this bill. I'm asking this committee to please vote ought to pass on LD 1862. Thank you.