



Maine Sheriffs' Association

"One Team, One Mission"

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February 9, 2022

L.D. 1862 – An Act to Strengthen Maine's Good Samaritan Laws Concerning Drug-Related Medical Assistance

Senator Deschambault, Representative Warren, and honorable members of the Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety, my name is Scott Nichols. I am the Sheriff of Franklin County and I'm here on behalf of the Maine Sheriffs' Association. Maine sheriffs discussed this bill and voted unanimously to **oppose** L.D. 1862 – An Act to Strengthen Maine's Good Samaritan Laws Concerning Drug-Related Medical Assistance.

In 2019, Maine enacted our current Good Samaritan Law. The broad purpose of such laws are to encourage people to call 911 without fear of being found guilty of drug-related crimes. An unrelated bill, but one also passed to help stem overdose deaths was Maine's syringe distribution program, which cost Maine over a million dollars last year alone. We heard from many citizens who have or had used injectable drugs who indicated they support increasing the syringe distribution program without any accountability for the syringes that are discarded improperly.

Last week, the deputies who participated in a Somerset County drug raid waited the obligatory twenty seconds before entering the building. During this time, deputies could hear the inhabitants flushing repeatedly, and found the floor littered with empty drug wrappers. The twenty second delay is another newly enacted law that enables illegal substance abuse to flourish in our state.

A twenty-three percent increase in overdose deaths last year tells a very compelling story. Continuing to pass laws that fail to hold people responsible for their actions isn't working. LD 1862 simply gives too many people too many allowances for criminal behavior. This bill rewards people for doing nothing at the scene of an overdose, except not leave.

Maine sheriffs unanimously ask that you send a message to your constituents that says you cannot look the other way. Continuing to ignore accountability is not the way out of this catastrophic scenario where illegal drug use and overdose deaths are rampant in our state.

Thank you for allowing the Maine Sheriffs to share their views. We welcome any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

Sheriff Scott Nichols
Maine Sheriffs' Association