

Good Morning Senator Susan Deschambault, Representative Warren, and Honorable members of the Criminal Justice & Public Safety Committee:

My name is Nikole Powell, I am a resident of Southern Maine Women's Re-Entry Center in Windham Maine and I am here today to testify in favor of LD-1862. Expanding the Good Samaritan Law will save lives.

We are losing 12 friends and family members to overdose each week to PREVENTABLE overdose. This is NOT acceptable! I have so many friends since my high school years who have been lost to a preventable overdose. Had there been sufficient laws to protect the people they were with at the time of their overdose many would still be alive. Instead the people who could have helped were scared of facing incarceration if they called 911.

My boyfriend and BEST friend lost his life in August of 2020. This could have been prevented if the person he was with wasn't on bail and afraid to go to jail if she called for help. The problem is that we do not need law enforcement in a medical situation. They should not be using the same radio channels because if local police know the address or look it up later on they could make up reasons to go for bail checks and arrest the person after the fact, which does not help someone that is in need of help. If this girl was not on bail and afraid to go to jail she would have never left the house in order to get help. Once she did leave and called for help, it was too late and he lost his life.

Later in the day, knowing the address where the overdose happened, she was arrested on a bail violation after a "random" bail check. Coincidence? I think not. My best friend would still be alive. It tears me apart everyday as I have been incarcerated since before, he passed away and haven't even been able to properly grieve about this happening.

This is one of many stories I could tell about my friends dying from overdose without the help they needed. Expanding the Good Samaritan Law will save lives. Thank you for your time.

Nikole Powell