

Jason Trahan  
Lewiston  
LD 1862

Senator Deschambault, Representative Warren, and honorable members of the committee: my name is Jason Trahan, I am a resident of Lewiston, and I am here today to testify in favor of LD 1862.

I'm a person in long-term recovery. I lead meetings and sponsor other people seeking recovery. I'm a dad, and an artist, and sometimes an activist. I've spent a lot of time around people who used drugs. Some of those people are still alive. Some aren't. While I've never been on the scene of an overdose, I've heard things. I've known people who did their best to revive the person they were using with. I've also known people who just emptied the person's pockets and left. And I know if we want to stop losing so many people to overdose, we need to make sure people know they won't be punished if they do the right thing.

I have a friend who's in recovery now. One time she had a near-overdose and woke up with two black eyes because the person she was with freaked out and smacked her till she woke up. This happens a lot; people panic when they think someone's overdosed. Wouldn't it be better if they felt comfortable calling 911?

Let's be really honest here. I don't know how well you can see me in my little Zoom box. I don't know if you can see my piercings or tattoos. But let's just say that not everyone wants to give someone like me the benefit of the doubt. Now, say I wasn't known in the community as someone in recovery. Let's say I gave someone Narcan and stayed to call 911. I'd probably think once or twice if I should leave or not. The kid who lives downstairs from me is still using. If I found him unconscious, what would I do? Even knowing I hadn't done anything wrong, I might worry that the police would look at me and my record and say, "Well, you've got a pretty bad history here, too." And that's not right. If you're saving somebody, why would you get in trouble?

I support this bill because people shouldn't have to decide between protecting themselves and saving lives. I hope you'll support it, too.