

Dear Senator Deschambault, Representative Warren, and honorable members of the Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety:

My name is Miranda Wotton-Thayer, I am a resident at Southern Maine Women's Re-Entry Center in Windham, Maine, and I am writing today to testify in favor of LD 1862.

The fear of criminalization makes it hard to call 911 and makes recovery from substance use even harder.

In 2016 my sister Alexis Anderson passed away at a hotel from an overdose. She was 19 and a mother of a young daughter. The person that brought her the substance was on bail and when she started to realize that she was not okay, asked him to bring her to the hospital. He refused to do so because he was scared so instead told her to just lay down and go to sleep.

At 5:40 the next morning his 10-year-old son had woken up to find my sister passed away in the bed. She had asphyxiated in her sleep. Because he was too scared to call 911 and get her the help she needed, I lost my best friend, my niece lost her mother, and my mother lost her daughter. It's situations like this that can be and should be being avoided every day. There is only one way to make something work that isn't already working, and that's to try something different. I beg you to pass this bill to help save at least one life.

Again, the fear of calling for help in a medical situation should not lead to criminal charges. People should feel safe in the midst of their disease.

Thank you for your time.