

03/02/2023

Senator Baldacci, Representative Meyer, and Members of Health and Human Services Committee:

My name is Christina Mallock and I am submitting testimony on behalf of the Downeast Children's Advocacy Center.

I am submitting testimony in support of LD 566, An Act to Provide Funding for Sexual Assault Services.

As the Family Advocate at our center I have a complicated job. When there is suspicion that a child has been abused we receive a referral from DHHS or law enforcement. It is my job to find out who needs to be involved in the investigation. This includes Law enforcement officers, CPS workers, Victim Witness Advocates and Tribal Social Services. I coordinate all team members so that the child can come in and be interviewed a single time while team members watch on CCTV. While this is happening I am with the family of the child, offering emotional support and helping get them set up with any services they may need such as counseling, a medical exam, and a long term support system. I then stay in contact with the family in case other services are needed. Part of this means that I am hearing the atrocities these children have been forced to endure, and it is heartbreaking. It provides me great comfort knowing that I am able to help them on their healing journey and I am thankful to be able to be there for them.

As much as I love my job, and the work I am doing, it is not sustainable long term for me. My income of \$1100 biweekly is not enough to provide a living for one person, let alone a single mother. I would hate to have to leave my position as it is one that is very difficult to fill as there are few people who can bear the emotional load of hearing what terrible things are happening to these children. The turnover rate is incredibly high, not due to burnout but due to the extremely low pay for what we are doing. Training for this work is long and intensive, meaning that replacing a person who has left can take several months. I sincerely hope that you vote in support of LD 566 so that I will be able to continue with this work for years to come.

Thank You for your time. I appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony that may help in your decision.

Sincerely,

Christina Mallock, Family Advocate Downeast CAC