

Leo Hylton
Warren
LD 566

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

My name is Leo Hylton and I am a resident of Maine State Prison, Warren.

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

As someone currently incarcerated for a violent crime, I am largely unable to participate in taking reparative action in the aftermath of the harm I caused. Thankfully, through my studies and service work, I have had the honor of engaging with people who have served as advocates and support people for survivors of domestic and sexual violence.

There is no amount of money, no level of salary, that can offset the constant exposure and risk of vicarious and secondary trauma by advocates in this field. As one of them described it to me recently, the work can be deeply soul-crushing.

The absolute least that this legislature can do is provide funding support to those who continue to dedicate their lives to the healing of those most vulnerable. LD 566 not only addresses the financial insecurity of people whose heart-rending work and service does not fit neatly within a nine-to-five schedule. This bill also supports organizations that work to help mitigate the disproportionate impact of sexual violence on certain populations – funding sexual assault services to immigrants, trans people, people with disabilities, and others who may need culturally-competent services in order to access what they need for healing.

There is a great need for financial support, and you are in a position to provide it.

Therefore, it is with urgency that I implore you to vote unanimously “ought to pass” on LD 566 - An Act to Provide Funding for Sexual Assault Services.

Thank you for taking the time to hear and consider my urgent plea.