
In support of LD1844 “An Act to Support Emergency Housing Facility Construction, Renovation and Acquisition Statewide by Creating a Matching Grant Program.”

Before the Joint Select Committee on Housing

May 12, 2023

Senator Pierce, Representative Gere, and members of the Joint Select Committee on Housing, I am writing on behalf of the Maine Coalition to End Domestic Violence (MCEDV)¹ in support of LD1844 “An Act to Support Emergency Housing Facility Construction, Renovation and Acquisition Statewide by Creating a Matching Grant Program.”

MCEDV member programs provide shelter to survivors from all 16 counties and have been doing so since the 1970s. There are 12 domestic violence specific shelter buildings and 1 specifically for people escaping Human Sex Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation in Maine with a total of 143 beds available, and they are typically operating at capacity. They are experienced shelter providers uniquely structured and staffed to assist adult survivors of domestic abuse and violence and their children, and they need support to continue to do so for the years to come.

Every year Domestic Violence Resource Centers (DVRCs) receive significantly more requests for emergency shelter than they can fulfill. And, due to the lack of safe, accessible, affordable housing in Maine, more survivors are staying for longer in shelter. This directly impacts the number of survivors who can access emergency shelter. Between October and December 2022, there was a 22% increase in the number of nights survivors stayed in emergency shelter and during the same period there was a 15% increase in survivors requesting shelter. There are simply not enough emergency beds in the state to adequately shelter all those who need them.

¹ MCEDV serves a membership of eight regional domestic violence resource centers as well as the Immigrant Resource Center of Maine. Our member programs provided services to more than 12,000 victims of domestic violence in Maine last year.

Having access to additional dollars through a matching grant program will help the DVRCs renovate aging buildings and add to their emergency shelter capacity. Survivors of domestic abuse and violence, including children, deserve access to high-quality & safe spaces in which they can begin to rest and heal from the harm they experienced. They deserve this in a shelter where trained advocates are available to support them through this journey.

Because of this, we encourage you to support LD1844 “An Act to Support Emergency Housing Facility Construction, Renovation and Acquisition Statewide by Creating a Matching Grant Program.”

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