

Sarah Mattox
Swanville
LD 2084

RE: Support “An Act to Provide Funding for Essential Services for Victims of Crimes” (LD 2084)

January 19, 2024

Esteemed Members of the Judiciary Committee:

I write to ask you to support LD2084, “An Act to Provide Funding for Essential Services of Victims of Crimes”. It is a practical and necessary investment in community infrastructure of healing, justice, and stemming the costly multi-generational repercussions of trauma. This infrastructure - and therefore this funding - supports meeting people where they are - in their communities - and assures them that they matter, that they are not alone.

As a member of the state’s restorative justice provider community, I have had the great privilege to sit at hundreds of kitchen tables and to hear people’s stories; to invite them to reflect on their lives and how they came to inhabit them, to muse over what’s working and what’s not. In my early days, I was sometimes startled by how forthcoming people were about sharing their experiences of violence and its profound effects on their confidence, personal relationships, and sense of ease or authenticity in their homes and communities; also evident was the bright line connecting a parent or caregiver’s experiences to their child’s challenges - a mother’s fearfulness with her son’s anger; a father’s inability to ask for support with his daughter’s defiance and self-harm, and so on. And unaddressed, over the years, this insight - consequential yet basic - compounds and affects all those interconnected realms within the community - classrooms, schools, service providers - such as case managers, social workers, law enforcement, and - eventually - that child’s children.

Supporting LD2084 is not bleeding heart politics, it is sound fiscal investment. Each human psyche scans the world around them constantly, asking: “am I safe? Do I matter?” And, while this is often happening at the level of the subconscious, when a person is subjected to significant violence, these questions come to the fore and are - often - the only thing a person can consider. The two most basic remedies to this profound alarm involve a sense of warmth and accompaniment. When these ingredients are present, a person can begin to settle, to access higher-level meaning making and executive functioning, and begin to re-story themselves - often making healthier choices for themselves and those around them. This service is precisely what this funding makes available; through MECASA, MCEDV, victim advocacy and practical basic needs support for survivors.

I urge you to pass and fund this bill. I cannot think of a singular, more important agenda item.

Respectfully,

Sarah Mattox

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