

January 23, 2024

Dear Senator Carney, Representative Moonen, and Members of the Judiciary Committee,

My name is Kathleen Auclair, and I am providing testimony as an employee of the Sexual Assault Crisis and Support Center, the sexual assault support center for Kennebec and Somerset counties. I am writing to express my wholehearted support for LD 2084, "An Act to Provide Funding for Essential Services for Victims of Crimes." Over the last ten years I have worked in this field I have personally witnessed the transformative impact that dedicated support services can have on survivors' lives and their pursuit of justice.

Navigating the criminal or civil justice system is emotionally and mentally draining for survivors, and the importance of comprehensive support services cannot be overstated.

One key aspect of our work involves providing survivors with emotional support and guidance throughout their legal journey. The trauma resulting from sexual assault can be overwhelming, and survivors often face numerous challenges when coming forward to seek justice. But with compassionate and understanding advocacy, including accompaniment to court hearings and help navigating systems, again and again I have seen survivors gain the strength and confidence to persevere through the legal process.

Sexual assault prevention and support services are not only vital for the individual survivor but also contribute to the overall well-being of our communities. By investing in these services, we reinforce the message that survivors deserve to be heard, believed, and supported. Additionally, such services play a crucial role in breaking the cycle of silence that often surrounds sexual assault, fostering a culture where survivors feel empowered to come forward without fear of judgment or reprisal.

LD 2084 represents a crucial step toward ensuring that survivors have access to the essential services they need to navigate the legal process and rebuild their lives. I urge you to support this important legislation, recognizing that its passage will not only enhance the quality of support services available to survivors but also contribute to the broader goal of creating a more just and compassionate society.

Thank you for your dedication to the well-being of our community and your consideration of the impact LD 2084 can have on the lives of survivors. I am hopeful that, with your support, we can strengthen our commitment to justice and support for victims of crimes.

Sincerely,

Kathleen Auclair

Office Coordinator, Sexual Assault Crisis & Support Center