

Testimony from Tobin Williamson of the Maine Immigrants' Rights Coalition regarding:
LD 2084: An Act to Provide Funding for Essential Services for Victims of Crimes

Sponsored By: Senator Carney of Cumberland County
Public Hearing: January 23, 2024 at 1:00pm

Dear Members of the Committee on Judiciary:

My name is Tobin Williamson and I am the Manager of Advocacy & Policy with the Maine Immigrants' Rights Coalition (MIRC), a network of around 100 member organizations working to enhance the lives of Maine's immigrant communities across the state. MIRC works to advance systemic changes in Maine through collaborative advocacy to ensure that voices and perspectives of the state's large, diverse, and growing immigrant communities are heard at the State House in Augusta, in the Halls of Congress in D.C., and in municipalities throughout Maine.

Regrettably, federal funding for the [Victims of Crime Act](#), a law which is more than forty years old now, is set to see dramatic decreases next year (at the moment, funding is set to [decrease by more than half the current levels](#), according to the *Bangor Daily News*). This federal law has helped states offer victim assistance and support services for decades; for example, [the Maine Women's Lobby says](#) these funds include "legal services, victim advocates, [domestic violence] services," and – of specific interest to my organization – "victim services for immigrants and refugees." We have seen way too many times how often people at risk rely on programs like these in times of need.

If this legislation is not passed, these essential services risk going unfunded. Many immigrants come to Maine seeking safety and security. Tragically, Maine will become a little less safe if these programs and supports are reduced or eliminated. To quote the Maine Coalition Against Sexual Assault (MECASA), "[impacts will be felt across systems](#) that survivors of crimes count on for support and guidance as they navigate their search for justice and healing."

We join our friends at groups like the Maine Women's Lobby and MECASA in strongly encouraging you to pass LD 2084 and provide ongoing funding for crime victim services. Thank you for your consideration of this important matter.

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