

LD 2085 "An Act to Update Maine's Domestic Violence and Stalking Laws"

Dear Senator Carney, Representative Moonen and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary. My name is Ahmen Cabral and I am a resident of Gorham Maine. I am writing in support of LD 2085, *An Act to Update Maine's Domestic Violence and Stalking Laws* as a concerned citizen. Stalking and harassment are serious issues, and it's important to address them effectively. Strengthening stalking laws and improving the process for obtaining protection orders will provide better safeguards for victims.

The present Maine laws on harassment and stalking leave the perpetrator with too much time to continue to cause harm to their victims until the victim navigates a lengthy and time-consuming process of providing documentation to get protection orders in place, and to prove violations of granted protection orders. During this time, a perpetrator may continue to cause harm and the victim has little to no protection.

This past year, I witnessed the damage that can be done during that time when protection orders are not established quickly or upheld. An employee who I have worked with for over ten years, was exiting a relationship that ended due to factors that include substance misuse. After my colleague was granted a protection order, the perpetrator continued to use power and control over her despite the legal document that the end of even though the relationship the relationship had ended. Last April, the perpetrator accessed the employees employee's personal bank account, withdrawing funds and leaving the victim to manage this with the bank, and local law enforcement. Charges have still not been filed for this incident despite having evidence and complaints, without any return of the money. He proceeded to take over her social media accounts. This included a social media account connected to the employees employee's work. The perpetrator used these platforms to shame the employee which was embarrassing for the employee her as she who upholds a professional role within the community and state. It was violating and humiliating and humiliating for my colleague the employee. The While this occurred, the employee was already dealing with providing law enforcement the documentation they needed to establish a violation of her protection order, and now due to this incident, she had to explain the situation to her colleagues and supervisors. The employee had to endure these difficult situations while enduring the worry about what the perpetrator might do next, and the frustration frustration of feeling unsupported and unprotected by law enforcement. Supporting this employee my colleague through this situation has made me realize that it's essential to work towards a legal framework that prioritizes the safety and well-being of victims and takes swift action against perpetrators of stalking and harassment.

This law is a step in the right direction of providing all of us us, our neighbors, friends, family and children the protection and support we deserve.

Thank you for your time and please reach out to me with any questions.

Ahmen Cabral

Gorham Maine