

Testimony of Emily Mott
Resident of Portland, Maine

Testimony In Support of LD 2084,
An Act to Provide Funding for Essential Services for Victims of Crime
January 23, 2024

Senator Carney, Representative Moonen, and esteemed members of the Judiciary Committee, my name is Emily Mott and I am a resident of Portland. As a survivor, attorney, and advocate, my life encompasses personal experience and various roles that may not continue to exist without your support for LD 2084. Today, I write in my personal capacity to share my testimony in strong support of LD 2084 and to emphasize the critical need for funding to maintain essential victim services in Maine.

In high school, I found myself in a relationship where I didn't feel safe. At the time, I questioned my feelings, thinking I might be overreacting. It was only when I saw the Power & Control Wheel¹ that everything became clear. It was his isolation tactics that led to the loss of my friends, his emotional abuse that caused me to doubt my own feelings, and his manipulation that left me constantly apologizing. His intimidation and coercion made me feel trapped, not loved. It was through this experience that I first realized how critical the availability of victim services is.

I had the privilege of working as a legal advocate at Caring Unlimited, York County's Domestic Violence Resource Agency during college and law school. In that role, I supported survivors of domestic violence through various processes, including preparation for the final hearing on their protection from abuse order.

I will never forget a particular survivor I supported during a lengthy hearing where her order was ultimately denied. The heart-wrenching sound of her tearful scream and her collapse on the floor out of sheer exhaustion stay with me to this day. I remember joining her on the floor of the courtroom, holding her in my lap as she sobbed, with the defendant, her abuser, and his attorney,

¹ <https://www.thehotline.org/identify-abuse/power-and-control/>

still standing on the other side of the room. As I write this, I can't help but imagine what this moment would be like for her if I were not there as her advocate.

During my time as a student attorney at the Cumberland Legal Aid Clinic, I had the privilege of representing numerous survivors through the Protection from Abuse Project at the Lewiston District Court. The gratitude in my client's "thank you" when I assured her that she did not have to face the courtroom, and her abuser, alone still brings tears to my eyes.

By supporting LD 2084, you affirm your commitment to providing survivors across the State of Maine with the advocates they deserve. Denying this funding would send a message that their needs are not a priority. I implore you to seize this opportunity and recognize the critical nature of this funding.

Sincerely,
Emily Mott