

Sheryl Foster
Windham
LD 2085

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 Sheryl Foster, and I am a resident of Windham, Maine. I am writing today in support of LD 2085, An Act to Update Maine’s Domestic Violence and Stalking Laws as a concerned citizen, friend and neighbor. Stalking and harassment are serious offenses that can have profound, lasting and often detrimental emotional effects on victims. Strengthening laws and providing better processes to victims of domestic violence, harassment and stalking could potentially be a matter of life and death for some. The current laws in place leave too many loopholes for perpetrators to continue their ongoing assaults without consequence.

In the past year, I have witnessed verbal/emotional abuse, stalking and harassment of a close friend. The constant barrage of cyber-stalking and harassment and verbal assaults goes unpunished while pages and pages of documentation that support every instance leave the behaviors unchanged. For example, uncontrollable rages, substance use and abuse, creating fake accounts to follow them on social media; hacking into bank accounts; mail theft; hacking other social media accounts, including work-related accounts; contacting victims’ children through social media, using social media to shame and victim blame. The list of constant violations goes on and still the perpetrator is free to continue them without accountability.

These documents have and continue to be shared with law enforcement as each instance occurs while cyber-assaults have left my friend frightened, exhausted, extremely unsafe and unsupported. She has had a PFH in place for months, which has made little to no difference and has not protected them from constant harassment and abuse. She fears for her children’s safety and one child (age 8) cannot sleep due to nightmares as a result and is now being treated for anxiety.

It is through the enactment of laws, such as LD 2085, that could change the trajectory for domestic violence and stalking victims and survivors—the ones who are and continue to live in constant fear. Your consideration of this law could potentially save a life and help the people who continue to suffer receive the justice they deserve as well as the validation of their experiences.

Thank you for your time and consideration.