

LD 2290: An Act to Correct Inconsistencies, Conflicts and Errors in the Laws of Maine

Heard before the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary

Public Hearing Date: April 10, 2024

Testimony in Support

Senator Carney, Representative Moonen and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary,

My name is Lisa Belanger and I reside in North Yarmouth, Maine. I am submitting this letter in support of LD 2290.

The current law (LD 765) allows forensic interviews to be used to mitigate some of the potential for harm committed in the practice of making children fully re-disclose their abuse history in a public courtroom. It is a positive step in mitigating some re-traumatization that happens when children have to redisclose trauma repeatedly, and especially in a courtroom setting with many strangers...and their abuser. Because the law didn't explicitly state that it applies to pending cases, judges aren't able to admit the interviews. Please act to amend this law to include pending cases and therefore enable children who are currently facing this incredibly stressful situation to be better protected from harm.

There are Maine children currently in need of this protection and care. I know one of these children; a young, vibrant, endearing child that is being adversely impacted by the impending specter of this court disclosure practice. It would make a tremendous difference in this child's court experience and well-being to have this amendment passed. Please extend the current decision to include forensic interviews to the children who need it most: those going through this process right now.

For these reasons, I am in support of LD 2290 as emergency legislation.

Thank you,

Lisa Belanger, North Yarmouth Resident