



*Senator Joe Rafferty*

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**Testifying in Support of: LD 549, An Act to Establish A Statewide Sexual Assault Forensic Examination Tracking System and Update Certain Requirements Regarding Sexual Assault Forensic Examination Kits.**

Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn and distinguished members of the Judiciary Committee. My name is Joseph Rafferty and I proudly represent Senate District 34 which includes the communities of Berwick, North Berwick, Wells, Kennebunk and Kennebunkport.

I find the statistics provided by The Maine Coalition Against Sexual Assault (MECASA) both startling and disturbing. They state: One in five Mainers will experience sexual assault at some point in their lifetime. Each year, 19,000 Mainers will experience sexual violence. In 2019, only 514 rapes or attempted rapes were reported to Maine law enforcement.

Rape kit systems that store and track results provide multiple benefits. Two that stood out to me are that kits encourage victims to come forward and restore dignity of victims as they move toward a combination of healing and closure.

Nationwide, forty states have implemented or committed to establishing a rape kit tracking system. Maine has not!

LD 549 gives us the opportunity to assist victims in becoming "whole" again while providing law enforcement tools needed that could: identify serial offenders, increase prosecution rates, solve cold cases, exonerate the wrongly accused and deter potential perpetrators.

Thank you for your work and continued efforts in helping to keep Maine the place we've come to be known as "The Way Life Should Be".

Sincerely,

Joseph Rafferty SD34