



JANET T. MILLS
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MAINE
DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS
111 STATE HOUSE STATION
AUGUSTA MAINE
04333-0111

RANDALL A. LIBERTY
COMMISSIONER

TESTIMONY OF

SAM PRAWER, DIRECTOR OF GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS MAINE DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

March 3, 2025

Neither for nor against:

LD 666, An Act to Prevent Domestic Violence by Providing Adequate Funding Support for Court-ordered Certified Domestic Violence Intervention Programs

Senator Beebe-Center, Representative Hasenfus and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety, I am Sam Praver, Director of Government Affairs at the Maine Department of Corrections (DOC) providing testimony today neither for nor against LD 666, An Act to Prevent Domestic Violence by Providing Adequate Funding Support for Court-ordered Certified Domestic Violence Intervention Programs.

Certified Domestic Violence Intervention Programs (CDVIPs) are widely recognized as the most appropriate and effective community intervention in cases involving domestic violence. This conclusion is supported by the Maine Commission on Domestic and Sexual Abuse's 2016 report to the Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety, and it has also been formally recognized by the Legislature under Title 17-A §1501(9). While there is no perfect program to address domestic violence, the efficacy of these programs is why the Legislature also saw fit that participation in a CDVIP ordinarily be a required condition of probation for those convicted of domestic violence offenses (*see* 17-A MRS §1807). In addition to the benefits these programs provide to domestic violence offenders, the programs also provide a coordinated community response that supports victims: Programs in most parts of the state participate in regional domestic violence task forces that bring together law enforcement, safe nurses, prosecutors, and domestic violence and sexual assault advocates; CDVIPs partner with Domestic Violence Resources Centers in each region, which work with victims as their partners go through the programs; and CDVIPs also have collaborative relationships with both the prosecutors and DOC probation offices.

Maine Department of Corrections is directly involved in facilitating CDVIPs in the state. Pursuant to Title 19-A §4116, DOC is the state agency responsible for establishing standards and procedures for the CDVIPs, as well as providing the program certifications. The Department's Office of Victim Services works directly with the Maine Commission on Domestic and Sexual Abuse to accomplish these responsibilities. Additionally, DOC is the state agency through which funding for these programs is delivered. The 26-27 Biennial Budget currently includes \$287,500 for the CDVIPs, the vast majority of which is designated for reimbursing costs associated with enrolling participants that cannot otherwise afford to pay for the program (about \$200,000). That money also supports costs related to positions at Maine Coalition to End Domestic Violence (MCEDV) necessary to provide support for and annual quality assurance monitoring of the CDVIPs, and administer the reimbursement funds, as well as money for annual training to support the programs.

Throughout 2024, MCEDV calculates that CDVIPs across the state served a total of 1225 people, 723 of which were assigned to the programs as a condition of probation. The \$200,000 currently budgeted to reimburse programs taking on participants that cannot otherwise afford to pay is meant to cover partial costs associated with approximately 119 individuals, which equates to less than 10% of program participants. For this reason alone, it should be easy to understand why the reimbursement funds typically run out by the third quarter of each year.



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The Department cannot support the \$2.5 million dollars in ongoing funding proposed by this bill, due to the fact that it falls outside the scope of the Governor's 26-27 Biennial Budget. As noted in the Department's testimony in the joint public hearing with this committee and Appropriations and Financial Affairs, Maine is facing a tight budget environment and the administration has spent months carefully developing a balanced budget proposal to preserve the programs lawmakers and Maine people support while also protecting the state's long-term fiscal health. That being said, the Department is extremely supportive of Certified Domestic Violence Intervention Programs and views them as an essential component to addressing domestic violence in Maine. It is our understanding that this bill was put forward to ensure the long term viability and continued success of these programs, a goal that is shared by our team at DOC.

For the reasons stated above, the Department respectfully presents this testimony neither for nor against this proposal. If you would like more information about the Certified Domestic Violence Intervention Programs, please see the 2024 CDVIP Annual Report we submitted to this committee on February 10, 2025.

This concludes my testimony.

I am happy to answer any questions.

Sam Praver
Director of Government Affairs
Maine Department of Corrections