



02/21/2025

Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer, and Members of Health and Human Services Committee:

My name is Amanda Evans. I am a long-time resident of Waldo County and an advocate for Sexual Assault Support Services of Midcoast Maine.

I am submitting testimony in support of LD 117, An Act to Provide Funding for Sexual Assault Services.

Before stepping into advocacy work, I never realized the extent of its challenges or its emotional weight. Each day brings new situations and needs, and my role shifts depending on the individual I'm supporting. For some, I'm the resource who guides them through the complexities of the legal system or helps them in finding a safe place to live or assistance in meeting their basic needs, providing clarity when they feel overwhelmed. For others, I'm a safe space where they can learn about their rights, boundaries, and consent. Sometimes I've been the only support a person has had during the most traumatic moments after an assault, when they've felt isolated and afraid. For mothers dealing with their child's trauma, I'm someone they can lean on when they feel helpless or overwhelmed with guilt. I listen without judgment when survivors need to talk, even when they don't know what to say. For law enforcement who understand that survivors need more than just procedural assistance, I am an essential tool for these cases. In court, I become their shield, offering comfort and helping them navigate the emotional weight of confronting their abuser. Each day, I find myself filling many different roles, often simultaneously.

Beyond my work as an advocate, I'm also a single parent, juggling constant financial pressures without any additional support. I work full-time and take on extra shifts, but no matter how hard I try, I can barely make ends meet. The fear of falling behind on bills or losing my housing keeps me awake at night. It's an emotional strain I never expected, knowing that a single setback could mean losing everything, including the ability to care for my children. This work is deeply important to me, but the financial reality of my situation is unsustainable. If wages aren't increased to reflect the cost of living, I won't be able to continue in this role.

Thank you for your time and support. I hope you'll consider voting for this bill, not just for those of us in advocacy positions, but for the countless individuals we serve every day who rely on the support we provide.