

Hampden Police Department



LD 117 Request for Testimony

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

My name is William Miller, and I am a sergeant with the Hampden Police Department. I am submitting testimony in support of LD 117, An Act to Provide Funding for Sexual Assault Services.

The Hampden Police Department has developed relationships with Sexual Assault Advocates by consistently following best practice procedures in our investigations. This includes setting survivors up with Forensic Nurses at area hospitals, working with the Penquis Children's Advocacy Center (CAC), Rape Response, Partners for Peace, and guiding survivors toward other resources available to them.

I have worked directly with Forensic Nurses, the Children's Advocacy Center, and Spurwink Medical Services, and have seen the amazing impact they have on survivors, as well as being a better avenue to investigate crimes of such a sensitive nature. The Forensic Nurses provide guidance, support, and resources while collecting valuable evidence. Forensic Interviewers and Advocates at the CAC provide comfort and resources to juvenile survivors in a controlled environment, while following strict procedures.

In my experience, police agencies are using advocates and their organizations' services at a very high rate. The services are valuable for survivors to obtain the support, guidance, and resources they need to be successful in recovery. Being an advocate requires flexibility, patience, empathy, and mental fortitude, as these cases are very sensitive and have huge emotional impacts on all involved. I have seen a few long-term advocates take the responsibility of a large portion of the case load, as others only stay briefly before moving on to other career options. I believe raising the wages for advocates may be a step in the right direction to hiring and retaining quality advocates in the future.

Thank you!

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