

Testimony in support of LD 117
to the Committee on Health and Human Services
March 15, 2025

Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer, and distinguished members of the Committee:

My name is Sarah Johnson and I am a resident of Sanford.

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

In early 2019 I was teaching in a prison when a woman who had been in my class for over a year asked to talk with me. Her goal was to educate me on the abject lack of education, information and services for trauma victims. She is a wonderful woman who had been separated from her family, including 2 elementary school age children, and remained separated for over 5 years. She is now back with them, employed and involved in school parent groups as she always had been, and about to successfully complete her time on parole (so yes, we were not in Maine at the time).

She and her husband were victims in a mass shooting. After the incident, no one approached either of them to offer support services in any way, other than medical treatment. What she shared with me was the shock and fear she lived in on a daily basis. The stress of the shooting and prolonged trauma caused her to make some bad decisions, that I will state I believe were intended only to protect her children. She shared that even if she had recognized the mental health crisis she was experiencing, she was not sure she would have known how to look for help. We both agreed there would have been little help available.

I ask myself what would have been the cost of providing support services, compared to the lifelong cost and additional trauma to her, her family, her community, and the state.

Our legislation, and our budget, should reflect our values. I hope those values include funding for sexual assault services, and for services for all trauma-affected people.

I hope you will support this bill.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sarah Johnson
Sanford, Maine.