

**Testimony in support of LD 884**  
**to the Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs**  
March 15, 2025

Senator Rafferty, Representative Murphy, 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 884, Resolve, to Establish the Criminal Justice Legal Aid Clinic Pilot Project at the University of Maine School of Law

As we all know, due to the lack of Public Defenders and attorneys in general, Maine is currently violating the constitutional rights of many of our fellow citizens who can't afford a defense attorney. This is not an area where we should be leading the nation.

I ask that you please vote to establish and fund this legal aid clinic in the University of Maine system. Many law students would be enthusiastic participants knowing the benefits they would be providing to their neighbors and the experience they would be gaining themselves.

As noted by [New England Law | Boston Professor Russell Engler](#), “law school clinics provide free or low-cost legal services to clients who could not afford them otherwise, like single parents, people facing evictions, folks on fixed incomes, and many others. By working in a law school clinic, you can make a true difference in the life of an individual or a family. Learning in context is how you learn. Clinics get you out into the community, meeting other lawyers and building a network. They help you build your résumé. They help you figure out what areas of law you might want to pursue.”

Mainers are clearly in need of these resources, and students gain invaluable experience in areas of conducting client interviews, researching legal issues, preparing court documents, and advocating for their clients. This bill helps provide desperately needed services to the most disadvantaged Mainers, and develop the best lawyers.

I hope you will support this legislation.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sarah Johnson  
Sanford, Maine.

<https://www.nesl.edu/blog/detail/expert-advice-on-the-benefits-of-law-school-clinics>