

STATE OF MAINE

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**“An Act to Fund Essential Service for Victims of Domestic Violence”
Before the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services
LD 875**

**Public Hearing Date: March 19, 2025
Testimony of Assistant District Attorney Andrew P. Matulis**

Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services. My name is Andrew Matulis, and I am an Assistant District Attorney for Prosecutorial District 3, representing Androscoggin, Franklin, and Oxford Counties. I am here on behalf of District 3 to testify in support of LD 875; An Act to Fund Essential Services for Victims of Domestic Violence.

As a prosecutor who has worked with victims for 15 years, I have witnessed first-hand the devastating impact of domestic violence on individuals, families, and our community. You have the chance today to support the funding of services that are crucial to the fight against domestic violence and to invest in a healthier, safer future.

To start with some context, 1 in 4 women and 1 in 7 men will experience abuse or violence by an intimate partner in their lifetime. 1 in 15 children live in homes where one of the parents or the parent’s partner abuses the other adult. 90% of these children are eyewitnesses to the violence. Almost half of our homicides are the end result of abusive relationships. In 2024, over 14,000 people worked with our network of providers of domestic violence services. Simply put, the need for comprehensive support services is enormous given the scope of the problem.

As someone who often talks with members of the community about domestic violence, it is common for people to ask of victims, “why not just leave?” Ask yourself how easy it would be to walk away from your life if your partner became abusive? Where would you live? How would you support yourself? How would the kids be cared for? Leaving a violent relationship is an incredibly challenging process that often feels insurmountable without adequate financial, legal, and emotional support. Emergency shelters, counseling, legal assistance, and advocacy are vital resources that provide victims with the tools they need to rebuild their lives and regain

their independence. This funding pays for those tools and without these services, many victims remain trapped in dangerous situations, unable to break free from the cycle of abuse.

By funding essential services for victims of domestic violence, we are investing in the future we want—one where all individuals can remain in relationships by choice, free from the threat of harm or coercion. This investment is not only a moral imperative but also a practical one. Supporting victims of domestic violence contributes to the overall health and safety of our community, reducing long-term social and economic costs. Child protective actions, law enforcement responses, and prosecutions are all extremely expensive, yet many of these costs can be avoided by ensuring funding for response services and paths out of abusive relationships. You are not just helping victims now; you are also working to ensure that the next generation of abusers never exists because domestic violence is learned behavior, it is generational, and that cycle can come to an end with your help.

I urge you to prioritize the funding of Maine LD875. Your support can make a profound difference in the lives of countless individuals, providing them with the hope and resources they need to build a safer, more secure future.

/s/ Andrew P. Matulis

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