

Sami-Jo Stubbs
Gorham
LD 875

As a former advocate for one of Maine's domestic violence resource centers (DVRC) and as a current advocate in my role as a licensed clinical social worker in this great state of Maine, I am proudly testifying in support of LD 875. I have seen first hand the great work and outcomes, the dedication and the true passion our state's DVRCs and the Maine Coalition to End Domestic Violence (MCEDV) as a whole, puts forth to provide support, care and protections for victims and survivors in our state. MCEDV and their DVRCs work to increase safety in our communities across the state by providing direct services and education to ensure a coordinated community response from all providers, leaders and institutions that inevitably cross paths with victims and survivors. MCEDV and their DVRCs work towards prevention efforts through educating youth about healthy relationships, supporting and educating survivors within the prison system and they also provide education and guidance for perpetrators of intimate partner violence through their work with Certified DV Intervention Programs. MCEDV also works to reconnect, stabilize and strengthen parent-child relationships after being separated due to domestic violence through their steadfast collaboration with a supervised visitation agency in the State. For Maine lawmakers to place any barriers on MCEDV and their DVRCs would be a detriment to our State and would inevitably increase rates of violence and homicide both of which MCEDV has been able to reduce and/or help to stabilize overtime. Intimate partner violence/domestic violence is a public health issue which creates lasting effects on children and families. Early childhood trauma, such as trauma inflicted while living in a family that experiences domestic violence, can result in delayed functional skills attainment, delayed or missed developmental milestones, poor education achievements, poor self esteem, increased risk of future mental health diagnoses and challenges, poor physics health outcomes leading to increased medical needs, and overall increased risk of repeating cycles of victimization and perpetration related to domestic violence. I implore you to think about your personal connection to domestic violence as I believe everyone can think of someone they know who has experienced some form of domestic violence and without continued funding for these resources, the number of people you know who have been impacted by this type of violence will increase. Not one community, demographic and social status in our state is exempt from the effects of domestic violence. Please pass this bill to secure funding for these critical resources and programs.