

Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer, and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services. My name is Cynthia Aller Magill. I live in Kennebunkport and I am testifying in support of LD875, An Act to Fund Essential Services for Victims of Domestic Violence.

I have been involved with Caring Unlimited, York County's Domestic Violence Resource Center, for 5 years as a volunteer and community supporter. I became involved with this organization through two churches in the Kennebunkport area. They were one of the organizations we made yearly donations to through our Outreach Committee. I was assigned to them as their contact person. What I learned about this organization amazed me--especially the large scope of services they provide and the complex needs of families who find themselves in abusive, dangerous relationships. Families dealing with abuse are able to reach out to Caring Unlimited at any time. They provide a 24 hour help line, emergency shelters, housing on a more permanent basis, legal advice, employment advice, support for child care, and the list goes on and on. What they definitely do, is give these families dignity. They care not only for the physical needs but also emotional needs. They provide a safe, caring and loving support that goes above and beyond. They provide for not only the children and their needs, but the mothers struggling to survive in a new living environment and sometimes a new country. These services are so needed and so important.

Personally, I have witnessed the fact that new shoes for school, clothing and backpacks give children the confidence to go to school at the start of a new year with pride. I know that tangible items like cleaning supplies, clean linens, towels, toiletries also give these families sense of normalcy and replace items that they had to leave behind or were never able to have due to poverty or financial abuse. The Christmas Party for the mothers and their children that my churches host is a joy to behold to all who volunteer. To see children smiling

and joyful, to see their mothers smiling seeing their children excited and happy is proof that healing is possible within a supportive community. When Santa arrives, it is all of us who experience the magic and wonder that these children are experiencing.

All of this is because of Caring Unlimited and the selfless staff who day in and day out care for these families as if they were their own.

All of these services are important and so desperately needed. My hope is that this wonderful organization can continue doing these vital works. The need in our community is so great.

Thank you for your time,  
Cynthia Aller Magill