

3/13/2025

Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer, and Members of Health and Human Services Committee:

My name is Julie Robertson from Sidney, and I am submitting testimony in support of LD 117, An Act to Provide Funding for Sexual Assault Services.

As an advocate with the Sexual Assault Crisis & Support Center of Kennebec and Somerset Counties, there are so many things I do with and for survivors of sexual assault that are essential to their healing journey. When a victim has been sexually assaulted, I am one of the people who is there every step of the way, from supporting them through the forensic medical exam to being the voice on the helpline when they need to process to helping caregivers when the unimaginable has happened to their child. I meet with victims, teens or adults, one on one to work through their trauma. I help them navigate the legal system, filing civil protection orders and standing by them every step of the way. I hold non-offending caregiver support groups as well as support groups within Maine's jails for survivors who are incarcerated. There isn't a time in a survivor's journey that I can't be there as a confidential listening ear. I hear clients say, time and time again, "I never would have made it through this without you," whether in a hospital room, in a courtroom, or at the end of a support group.

Outside of my professional life, I am also a single mom of both a 7-year-old boy and a young adult with special needs. This work is very fulfilling, but I do need to support my family. LD 117 is essential in ensuring that someone like me is able to do this crucial work. Any cut in pay or reduction in hours would make it so I would have to leave this role that I love, meaning the survivors and their families that I work with would be left without the aid I am able to offer them in their healing journeys. I fear what that would mean for them mentally and physically.

Please vote to support those of us who work tirelessly for those impacted by sexual assault.

Thank you,
Julie Robertson