



Chief Richard E. Caton IV
Rangeley Police Department

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March 19, 2025

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

My name is Richard E. Caton IV, and I am submitting testimony as a Multidisciplinary Team (MDT) member with the Children's Advocacy Center of Androscoggin, Franklin, and Oxford Counties which is a program of Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Services (SAPARS), the sexual assault support center that serves Androscoggin, Franklin, and Oxford Counties. I also serve on the Board of Directors at SAPARS.

I am submitting testimony in support of LD 117, An Act to Provide Funding for Sexual Assault Services.

As a long-standing MDT member, I am deeply connected to the Children's Advocacy Center of Androscoggin, Franklin, and Oxford Counties (CACAF0). CACAF0 provides a child-centered, trauma informed, multidisciplinary approach when there are concerns of child sexual abuse and other forms of child abuse and neglect. Children can receive a forensic interview with someone who has training and expertise in talking to kids in a non-leading, legally sound, trauma informed way. Caregivers are supported throughout the process and connected with additional services and resources for themselves and their children. Multidisciplinary team members are able to gather the information they need from the forensic interview, which leads to more thorough investigations and more successful prosecutions.

As a Law Enforcement Officer, the CAC makes my job easier by providing me with high quality, legally-sound forensic interviews and ensuring that the supportive caregiver has what they need in order to support their child throughout the process. The staff at the CAC are experts in their roles. If we didn't have the CAC to assist with these complicated, time-consuming cases, my job would be so much more difficult.

The CAC has been short-staffed at certain periods and when it is it increases the amount of time it takes for children and families to get an appointment. This impacts my ability to do my job in a timely and efficient manner. I know that it has been difficult to fill some of the positions because of the salary rate not being enough for candidates. The work done at the CAC is difficult and not for everyone. Forensic interviewers and family advocates deserve a living wage.

I urge you to vote to pass this bill so that the CAC can continue to provide these unique and critical services to some of Maine's most vulnerable populations.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Richard E. Caton IV", is written over a light blue circular stamp.

Richard E. Caton IV
Rangeley Police Chief
MDT Member, CACAF0