

# Prevention Action Change

Building Skills to End Violence

Clara Porter  
Portland, ME  
March 19, 2025

Dear Senator Ingwersen, Representative Myer, and Honorable Members of the Joint Standing Committee Health and Human Services.

Thank you for the opportunity to address the Committee. My name is Clara Porter, I am a longtime resident of Portland and am representing Prevention. Action. Change. in submitting this testimony in support of LD117.

I am the Director of Prevention. Action. Change., an organization dedicated to violence prevention, intervention, response and healing. I have worked with survivors of sexual violence for over 30 years, 10 of those years I was a volunteer on the SARSSM (Sexual Assault Response Services of Southern Maine) crisis line.

Advocates are highly trained individuals who provide support and resources in our hospitals, police stations, courts, and schools to people who have experienced sexual violence - a level of trauma which has lasting impacts on par with those of combat veterans.

As a volunteer, there were times when I would call a staff advocate in the middle of the night with a question about a policy or protocol or to ask for support following a difficult call with a survivor. Staff were unfailingly patient and present, able to navigate difficult situations, and support volunteer efforts. In my current work, advocates are equally critical, providing critical support to survivors engaged in our programs and acting as an important referral source.

Advocates enter these positions because they care deeply about the work they do. And yet the pay does not allow them to stay in the work long-term causing high turnover and disruption of services. A \$45,000 base salary, while still low, is an important step towards proving the respect for the people doing the toughest work: survivor support.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my perspective with the committee. I urge you to vote "Ought to Pass" on LD 117.

Sincerely,



Clara Porter