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Testimony of Rep. Kristen Cloutier in support of
LD 117, An Act to Provide Funding for Sexual Assault Services
Before the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services

Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer and distinguished members of the Health and Human Services Committee. My name is Kristen Cloutier, and I represent House District 94, which includes part of my hometown of Lewiston. I am pleased to provide testimony in support of **LD 117, An Act to Provide Funding for Sexual Assault Services**.

One in five Mainers will experience sexual assault at some point in their lifetime. This devastating statistic demands action to protect these individuals. It is a responsibility that falls to advocates across our state daily.

For decades, these dedicated professionals have supported survivors and mobilized communities to combat sexual assault. Their advocacy is multifaceted yet centers on one crucial mission: guiding each person through their unique healing journey. Self-determination, autonomy, and social support are fundamental to recovery. These are all elements that advocates provide with compassion and expertise.

Sexual assault advocates deliver essential services: accompanying survivors to hospitals for forensic exams, navigating complex legal processes, providing crisis hotline support, and securing basic needs like safe housing and stable employment. Their work creates a foundation for healing when survivors need it most.

LD 117 will provide critical funding to fairly compensate these professionals. These advocates deserve not only our respect but also adequate resources that reflect the profoundly challenging and vital work they perform. This bill represents an important step toward ensuring they can continue supporting the most vulnerable members of our communities.

Thank you for your consideration. I urge you to support LD 117.