

Good Day members of the Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee. My name is Bethany McInnis, I am a Nurse Practitioner, I live in Oxford County, I also am a domestic violence survivor of nearly 3 decades before I was able to successfully leave my abuser. I am here today in support of Finding our Voices and to testify in support of LD 1684 “An act to exclude from eligibility from a community confinement program a person serving a sentence for certain domestic violence crimes.”

I am in support of this bill as per the law a person is guilty of :  
“aggravated assault if that person intentionally, knowingly or recklessly causes”

A. Bodily injury to another that creates a substantial risk of death or extended convalescence necessary for recovery of physical health.

A-1. Bodily injury to another that causes serious, permanent disfigurement or loss or substantial impairment of the function of any bodily member or organ. Violation of this paragraph is a Class A crime; [PL 2015, c. 358, §1 (NEW).]

B. Bodily injury to another with use of a dangerous weapon. Violation of this paragraph is a Class B crime; or [PL 2015, c. 358, §1 (AMD).]

C. Bodily injury to another under circumstances manifesting extreme indifference to the value of human life. Such circumstances include, but are not limited to, the number, location or nature of the injuries, the manner or method inflicted, the observable physical condition of the victim or the use of strangulation. For the purpose of this paragraph, "strangulation" means impeding the breathing or circulation of the blood of another person by intentionally, knowingly or recklessly applying pressure on the person's throat or neck. Violation of this paragraph is a Class B crime.

There have been multiple cases over the last year in the news of people being beaten, strangled and killed. Let me bring a few to your attention. One that impacted my community and another a brave woman that I have met and can say she is the testimony that everyone should hear, as this is domestic violence, this is the story like that of “Gabby Petito” that everyone talks about and why all of you should support this bill.

1. **Leein Hinkley 43**, (June 2024), had been in custody on a probation violation related to his conviction in 2011 of domestic violence and elevated aggravated assault, as well as a recent domestic violence arrest. However, he was released by a district court judge after a court lowered his bail to \$1,500 with conditions, including house arrest at a Lewiston residence. Less than 72 hours later, he tried to break into the home of his former girlfriend's home just before 1 a.m. on Saturday, and got into a fight with a man inside, resulting in a standoff with the police, setting a fire that destroyed the former girlfriend's home and a neighboring house. The man inside he confronted died in the fire. He was previously sentenced in 2011 to 20 years in the double stabbing of his former girlfriend in front of their 14 month old child and a person who attempted to intervene. His domestic violence history stems back to 2001. Leein Hinkley was shot and killed

during the standoff with the police on June 15, 2024. (  
[https://www.yahoo.com/news/maine-top-judge-defends-judges-223400602.html?fr=yhssrp\\_catchall](https://www.yahoo.com/news/maine-top-judge-defends-judges-223400602.html?fr=yhssrp_catchall). <https://www.wbur.org/news/2024/06/17/auburn-maine-gunfire-house-fire-lewiston>

**This man was allowed early release, had he not been allowed out and had to serve his complete 20 years he would not have had the opportunity to terrorize his former girlfriend and a man would have not lost his life!**

2. **Irineu Goncalves, 35, of Revere, Massachusetts,** to serve 18 years in prison initially convicted for 30 years all suspended but 18, six years of probation and will be required to follow several conditions when released, including no contact with Bernhardt and their two children. He will have to submit to drug testing, not to possess any dangerous weapons, and to attend a batterers intervention program. He brutally tried to kill her. Her statement at her hearing described how he tried to break her neck and hit her in the face, and even strangled her on the ground in the hotel parking lot until she lost consciousness. He also was charged for assaulting a police officer when they were trying to intervene and assist the victim. Assault occurred June 2023. Sentenced July 2024. <https://www.newscentermaine.com/article/news/crime/irineu-goncalves-attempted-murder-sentence-assault-police-officer-conviction/97-7220afa8-8dc1-4b28-ba04-2c4774651a07>.

**If this Bill does not pass this dangerous man will be eligible for a community confinement program and place not only her and her children at risk but the community.**

3. **David Gaudreau, 60,** May 28th, 2024. "The Oxford County Sheriff's Office responded to the area of 106 Auburn Rd. in Peru — also known as Route 108 — around 7:10 p.m. Tuesday for reports of a crash. Callers told law enforcement a gun was fired from a truck into a car. Gaudreau had called several family members and told them he shot his wife; she was later identified as Dale Gaudreau, 59. **This case is especially close to me as she was a colleague of mine and friend. We have worked together for 15 years of my 17 year career in healthcare.**  
<https://www.newscentermaine.com/article/news/crime/peru-maine-shooting-dale-david-gaudreau-oxford-county-murder/97-1130cbfb-e0a6-466a-9840-fae1b3078af8>

**This case has yet to go to trial, he has currently plead not guilty, she has been gone nearly a year and yet her poor children and grandchildren not only lost their mother and grandmother, they lost their father and grandfather that day. They have yet to see justice for their mother and have to endure a trial that has not been timely.**

4. Richard Thorpe, 42, of Bangor is charged with intentional or knowing or depraved indifference murder in the death of Virginia Cookson, 39, of Bangor on Sept. 25

**Lastly, the case in which this bill was written. Richard was released 3 years early, he was given the right to be out and abuse again and kill Virginia.**

**National Coalition of Domestic Violence statistics are astounding, revealing that 20 people per minute are physically abused by an intimate partner**

**I, like many other women, am a domestic violence survivor, we continue to be impacted by a severely broken system. Often feeling like faceless victims in the courts, a docket number, only to be offered to be heard when we get to speak our truth with our victim impact statement.**

**Please, I beg of you hear our voices and side with victims, survivors the community and vote yes in support of LD1684**

**Warmest Regards,**

**Bethany R McInnis**