



May 5, 2025

Senator Beebe-Center, Representative Hasenfus, and Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety:

My name is Melissa Martin, and I am offering testimony today on behalf of the Maine Coalition Against Sexual Assault (MECASA), the organization which represents and serves Maine's sexual violence prevention and response programs as well as Maine's Children's Advocacy Centers. MECASA initiates and advocates for victim-centered public policy; provides expert training, technical assistance, and resources for providers and partners; and funds the service providers in your communities.

MECASA is submitting testimony in opposition to LD 1817, "An Act to Implement the Recommendation of the Maine Commission on Public Defense Services to Eliminate the Crime of Violation of Condition of Release."

There are strong links between physical sexual harm and stalking/online image abuse. Among stalking victims 18-24 years old, 16% said their stalker shared nude, semi-nude, and/or sexually explicit photos/videos of them.¹ Sexual violence may be part of a stalker's pattern of behavior. Sexually violent behaviors may include: surveillance (including online), sending unwanted items or photos of a sexual nature or about a sexual assault, spreading sexual rumors or publicly humiliating with information about sexual activity or assault, impersonating the victim online to discuss or share information about sexual activity, threatening to share sexual images or information or to spread sexual rumors, and posing as the victim to solicit sexual activity.²

Because of the links between sexual violence and stalking/online image abuse, it is essential that there are tools available to survivors of sexual harm who are engaging in the criminal justice system to prevent and address any additional harm.

¹ <https://www.stalkingawareness.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/Stalking-Sexual-Violence-Fact-Sheet.pdf>

² *Id.*

Therefore, we are interested in working with partners to support an approach to eliminate the Class E crime of violating conditions of release while addressing the safety needs of survivors of sexual harm and/or stalking. We believe that a central part of this work will be providing access to criminal orders of protection to survivors of sexual harm. This will be vital in preventing and addressing the types of stalking and contact that commonly occur before and after sexual violence.

For these reasons, we oppose the bill as drafted, but we hope to continue to work on this issue. Thank you for your careful consideration.

About Maine's Sexual Assault Service Providers

One in five Mainers will experience sexual assault at some point in their lifetime.³ Each year, 19,000 Mainers will experience sexual violence.⁴

Maine's [sexual violence service providers](#) provide free and confidential services across the state to victims/survivors of sexual harassment and sexual assault and those close to them, as well as to individuals who wish to increase their understanding of the issues. Just some of the services include a 24-hour statewide sexual assault helpline, crisis intervention and information, support groups, in-person accompaniment and advocacy through the medical and legal systems, and school- and community-based prevention education. Services are provided for a victim/survivor regardless of when they experienced sexual violence, and regardless of what type of sexual violence they experienced. Types of sexual violence include, but are not limited to, sexual harassment and gender-based bullying, child sexual abuse, elder sexual abuse, stalking, sex trafficking, and sexual violence within an intimate partner relationship.

*24/7 Confidential
Maine Sexual Assault Helpline: [1-800-871-7741](tel:1-800-871-7741)*

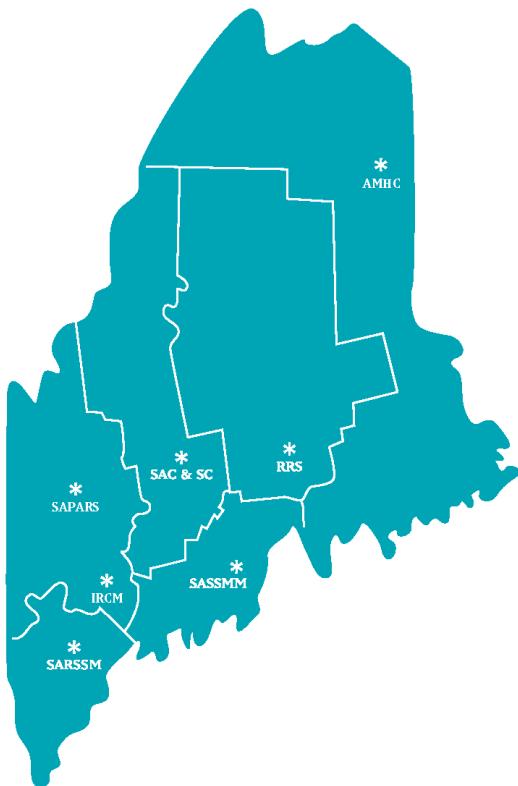
³ Murray, C., Dumont, R & Shaler, G. (2022). *Maine Crime Victimization Report: Informing public policy for safer communities*. Maine Statistical Analysis Center. University of Southern Maine.

⁴ *Id.*

mecasa

MAINE COALITION AGAINST
SEXUAL ASSAULT

info@mecasa.org | mecasa.org
207-626-0034



STATEWIDE
SEXUAL ASSAULT HELPLINE
1-800-871-7741

Free. Private. 24/7.

MAINE'S SEXUAL ASSAULT SUPPORT CENTERS

AMHC Sexual Assault Services (AMHC)

Serving Androscoggin, Hancock, & Washington Counties •
amhcsas.org

Immigrant Resource Center of Maine

Serving Androscoggin & Cumberland Counties • ircofmaine.org

Rape Response Services (RRS)

Serving Penobscot & Piscataquis Counties • rrsonline.org

Sexual Assault Prevention & Response Services (SAPARS)

Serving Androscoggin, Oxford & Franklin Counties and the towns of
Bridgton & Harrison • sapars.org

Sexual Assault Crisis & Support Center (SAC & SC)

Serving Kennebec & Somerset Counties • silentnomore.org

Sexual Assault Response Services of Southern Maine (SARSSM)

Serving Cumberland & York Counties • sarssm.org

Sexual Assault Support Services of Midcoast Maine (SASSMM)

Serving Eastern Cumberland, Sagadahoc, Knox, Waldo & Lincoln
Counties • sassmm.org

MORE SEXUAL VIOLENCE SERVICES

Maine TransNet • mainetrans.net • info@mainetransnet.org

Wabanaki Women's Coalition • wabanakiwomenscoalition.org
207-763-3478

Aroostook Band of Micmacs, Domestic & Sexual Violence
Advocacy Center • 207-551-3639

Houlton Band of Maliseets, Domestic & Sexual Violence
Advocacy Center • 207-532-6401

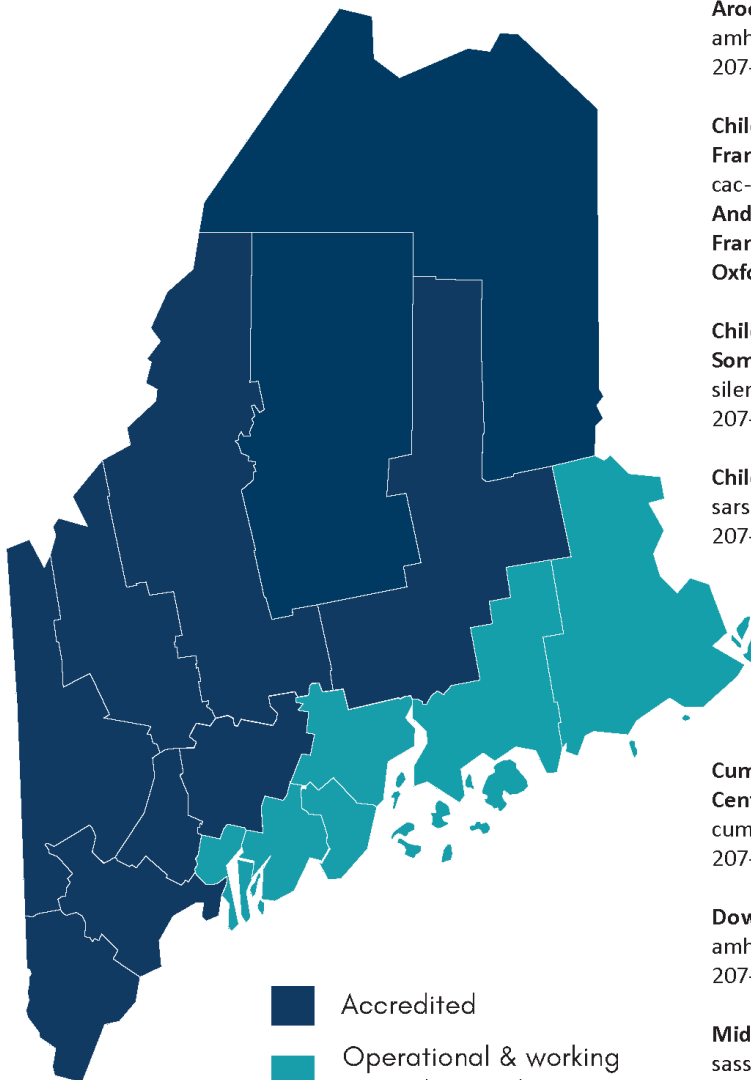
Indian Township Passamaquoddy, Domestic & Sexual
Violence Advocacy Center • 207-214-1917

Passamaquoddy Peaceful Relations • 1-877-853-2613

Penobscot Indian Nation, Domestic & Sexual Violence
Advocacy Center • 207-631-4886



Maine's Children's Advocacy Centers



■ Accredited
■ Operational & working
toward accreditation

Aroostook County Children's Advocacy Center
amhcsas.org
207-472-6134

**Children's Advocacy Center of Androscoggin,
Franklin, and Oxford Counties**
cac-afo.org
Androscoggin: 207-784-0436
Franklin: 207-778-9777
Oxford: 207-739-1228

**Children's Advocacy Center of Kennebec &
Somerset Counties**
silentnomore.org/about-our-cac
207-861-4491

Children's Advocacy Center of York County
sarsmm.org
207-459-2380

**Cumberland County Children's Advocacy
Center**
cumberlandcountycac.org
207-879-6160

Downeast Children's Advocacy Center
amhcsas.org
207-255-3687

Midcoast Children's Advocacy Center
sassmm.org
207-522-7162

Penquis Children's Advocacy Center
penquiscac.org
207-974-2469