

TESTIMONY OF  
Rev. Lorraine Cleaves Anderson  
IN SUPPORT OF  
**LD 1978**, An Act Regarding Government Liability Related to Sexual Acts Toward  
Minors  
May 19, 2025  
Judiciary Committee

Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and Honorable Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary, my name is Rev. Lorraine Cleaves Anderson. I live in Boston, MA. When I was 13, 14, and 15 years old, I was molested repeatedly by my Junior High School teacher. As a survivor of child sex abuse, I am here today to explain what LD 1978 means to survivors like me.

This legislation removes an arbitrary blockade that has for years prevented me from getting justice. Because I was sexually abused by a public school teacher (who went on to become a mayor and State of Maine Legislator) the governmental immunities of the Maine Tort Claims Act prevent me from having my day in court—from sharing my experience and healing.

When I was 13, 14, and 15, I had no choice in what happened to me. I did not get to “choose” whether I was abused or who the perpetrator was—much less where they worked. A child sexually molested by a religious leader or trusted physician can bring their case. But because my abuser worked for the South Portland Public Schools, I am denied the same opportunity under our laws.

That is arbitrary.

That is injustice.

LD 1978 restores dignity to survivors who make courageous decisions to come forward and make their communities safer. LD 1978 is as much about serving the safety of general public as it is individual survivors.

As a result of my injuries, I face a lifetime of Complex Post-Traumatic Stress Syndrome, with depression, anxiety, an eating disorder, and more. I have been in

and will require ongoing therapy and medication to function. Over the course of a survivor's lifetime, therapy costs can range from the high six- to low seven-figures.

In contrast, the Maine Tort Claims Act limits damages to \$400,000.

This is not about money. No amount could restore what was taken from me.

This is about justice. I and many survivors like me want the opportunity to be heard, to present my case to a jury, and to heal through the process of proving that what happened to us really happened. That matters.

You have the power to change my life and the lives of others like me. You have the power to vote Ought To Pass on this legislation and restore to me that which I never consented to giving up: my dignity.

I did not have power or choice when I was sexually abused as a child. You have both right now. As a constituent, fellow Mainer, neighbor, and human being, I am asking you to use these privileges for good.

Thank you very much. I pray and urge you to vote LD 1978 Ought To Pass. Thank you.