



MAINE COMMISSION ON DOMESTIC AND SEXUAL ABUSE

**Testimony of Lucia Chomeau Hunt
Speaking in Support of LD 1832**

An Act to Clarify Available Relief for the Protection of At-risk Children
Date of Public Hearing: May 16, 2025

Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and members of the Committee on Judiciary:

My name is Lucia Hunt. I am a member of the Maine Commission on Domestic and Sexual Abuse ("the Abuse Commission") and I am here today speaking on behalf of the Abuse Commission in support of LD 1832, An Act to Clarify Available Relief for the Protection of At-risk Children.

The Abuse Commission is comprised of law enforcement, attorneys, advocates, survivors, tribal members, representatives of underserved communities, a judicial advisory member, and representatives from within state government.¹ The Abuse Commission is tasked with advising and assisting the executive, legislative and judicial branches of State Government on issues related to domestic and sexual abuse.²

The Abuse Commission convened a panel discussion regarding Special Immigrant Juvenile ("SIJ") cases in June of 2023. The purpose of the panel was to identify areas where there were barriers to accessing this form of relief for at-risk children- many of whom had experienced significant trauma and abuse. The information from the panel led the Abuse Commission to convene an action committee comprised of Commission members, members of the Judicial Branch, DHHS, the AG's office, a probate court judge, and practitioners.

The Commission's SIJ Action Committee identified and implemented several strategies to address the barriers identified, including training for practitioners, the creation of forms for filing, and training for judicial officers. This legislation is one part of those broader efforts to increase access by clarifying parts of the process.

The Abuse Commission supports the bill's clarifications and believes that the proposed changes will increase judicial economy. Most importantly, at-risk youth who have been subjected to some of the most horrific sexual assault and other abuse will be able to more easily access relief.

Thank you to Senator Bailey and to this committee for your consideration of the clarifications in this bill, which will be beneficial for at-risk child survivors.

¹ 19-A M.R.S. § 4115 (1)

² 19-A M.R.S. § 4115 (3)