

**Testimony of Andrea Mancuso, on behalf of the Maine Coalition to End Domestic Violence  
In Support of LD 1922:  
“An Act to Support Workforce Development for Families That Were Involved in Child  
Protection Activities by Requiring Sealing of Certain Records”  
Tuesday, January 27, 2026**

Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer, and distinguished members of the Health and Human Services Committee, on behalf of the Maine Coalition to End Domestic Violence (MCEDV),<sup>1</sup> I write to share information on how LD 1922 will help survivors of domestic violence and their children better achieve long-term safety and economic stability.

Economic stability is the single biggest predictor of a domestic violence survivor’s ability to successfully “leave” an abusive relationship.<sup>2</sup> In a national survey conducted by the National Resource Center on Domestic Violence, a full 67% of survivors asked indicated that they had stayed in an abusive relationship longer than they wanted or returned to an abusive relationship due to financial concerns.<sup>3</sup> Addressing barriers to survivors of domestic abuse and violence in achieving economic stability independent from their abusive partner is essential to decreasing incidences of domestic violence in Maine. That principle is recognized in Maine law, most prominently in the statutory purposes of Maine’s protection from abuse statute, which directs courts to address economic support so that “victims are not trapped in abusive situations by ... financial dependence.” Yet, current policies and practices concerning child welfare records kept by the Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Child and Family Services work against the efforts of domestic violence victims to achieve financial independence, particularly for those survivors who seek employment in the social services sector, including childcare and healthcare fields.

Last year, specialized advocates employed by Maine’s regional domestic violence resource centers worked directly with more than 880 survivors of domestic abuse and violence in Maine who were also concurrently involved with an investigation by the Office of Child and Family Services or a child welfare court proceeding. Many of these survivors have

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<sup>1</sup> MCEDV’s membership includes the eight regional domestic violence resource centers (DVRCs) across Maine and two culturally specific service providers. In FY2025, **more than 14,000 people** sought and received assistance from Maine’s DVRC’s, which provide 24-hour crisis intervention, emergency sheltering, housing assistance, legal advocacy, child protective advocacy, and other practical assistance to help survivors overcome barriers to achieving safety for themselves and their children as well as consultation for those concerned about them.

<sup>2</sup> Office of Child Support Enforcement, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, “Policies to Promote Safety and Economic Stability for Survivors of Domestic Violence in the Child Support Program,” (ACF-OCSS-PIQ-25-01) (Jan. 2025).

<sup>3</sup> The National Domestic Violence Hotline, National Resource Center on Domestic Violence, and National Latin@ Network for Healthy Families and Communities at Casa de Esperanza (2018).

been or will be indicated or substantiated for neglect solely on the basis of having – in OCFS terms – failed to protect their child from living in a home where one parent was choosing to perpetrate abuse and violence against the other parent. Currently, the record of indication or substantiation held by OCFS will permanently follow them, visible on background checks and impeding their ability to seek the level of employment necessary to achieve financial independence from their abusive partner. This life-long consequence results from circumstances that are most often entirely outside of the survivor’s reasonable control.

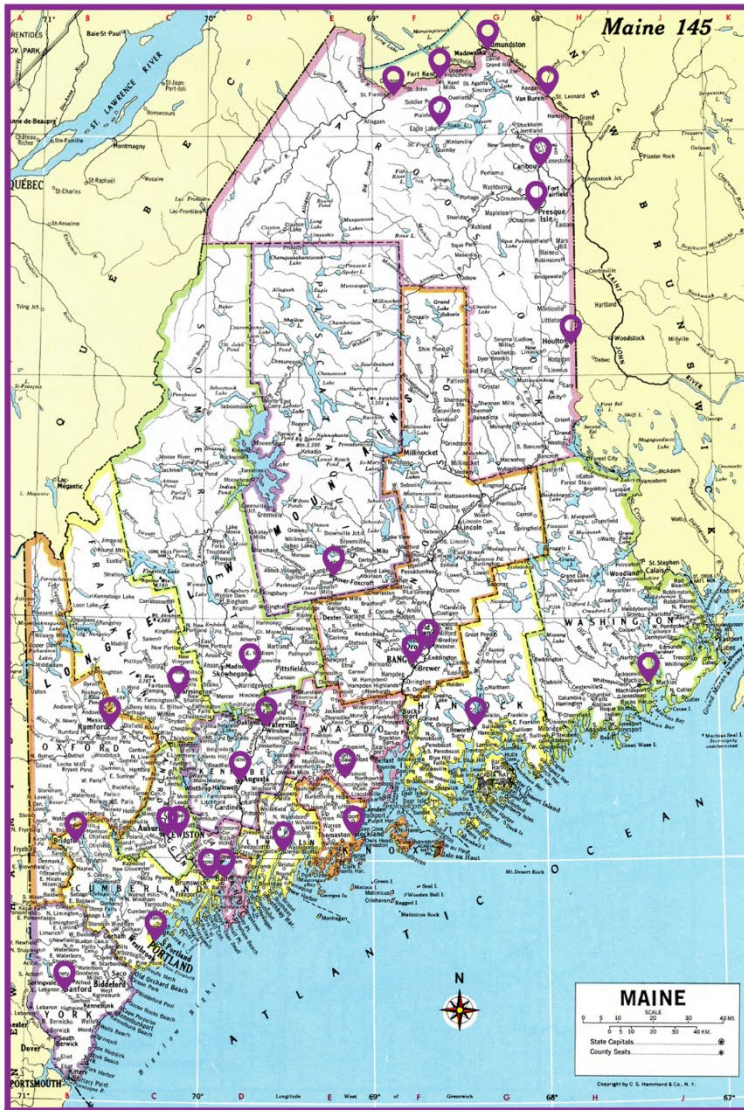
In ensuring child welfare records involving the most serious child abuse offenses remain unsealed, LD 1922 represents a crucial step towards justice, fairness and opportunity for so many individuals who have been impacted by the child welfare system response while also appropriately safeguarding public safety. In reducing barriers to economic stability for hundreds of domestic violence survivors across Maine each year, this proposal would also work to directly improve the likelihood of long-term safety for many of those survivors and their children. Thank you for the opportunity to share our perspective on this important legislation.

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We are the Maine Coalition to End Domestic Violence.



# Domestic Violence Resource Centers & Outreach Locations



## ANDROSCOGGIN, FRANKLIN & OXFORD

### Safe Voices

- Lewiston
- Farmington
- Rumford

### Culturally Specific Services:

#### Immigrant Resource Center of Maine & Her Safety Net

- Lewiston

## AROOSTOOK

### Hope & Justice Project

- St. Francis
- Eagle Lake
- Fort Kent
- Madawaska
- Van Buren
- Caribou
- Presque Isle
- Houlton

## CUMBERLAND

### Through These Doors

- Portland
- Bridgton
- Brunswick

## HANCOCK & WASHINGTON

### Next Step Domestic Violence Project

- Ellsworth
- Machias

## KENNEBEC & SOMERSET

### Family Violence Project

- Skowhegan
- Waterville
- Augusta

In addition to their resource centers and other outreach locations, DVRCs all have in-person presences at courts and CPS offices in their districts.

## KNOX, LINCOLN, SAGadahoc & WALDO

### New Hope Midcoast

- Rockland
- Damariscotta
- Bath

## YORK

### Caring Unlimited

- Sanford

## PENOBSCOT & PISCATAQUIS

### Partners for Peace

- Bangor
- Orono
- Dover-Foxcroft