

March 15, 2023

Senator Carney, Representative Moonen, and Distinguished Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary, my name is Kecia Reynolds of Gorham, and I am here to testify in support of LD 580. "An Act to Improve Family Court Procedure."

As I understand it, this bill is to include a new category of protection from abuse, which will provide an avenue of relief for families regarding domestic abuse without having to necessarily file a PFA. I do believe that a new category of protection from abuse in domestic and child custody situations is warranted, however, I strongly believe that many aspects of abuse in these situations are overlooked and need to be included in the bill.

Eight years and seven months ago, I told my daughter's biological father, Nicholas, that I was pregnant. We had never been in a relationship, and were not seeing each other when I found out. His response was to tell me that he would take the child from me. He said that he knew how the court system worked in Maine, that it favored fathers, and that he knew he could do anything he wanted to me as long as he didn't hit me. He also told me that he would never try to work with me and would bankrupt me in court. He did just that. He embarked upon a campaign of harassment that included calling the police to my house 24 times for 'welfare' checks, none of which resulted in any findings of misdeeds on my part. The police, in fact, knew and stated in their officer notes that he was using them to harass me. He always came up with some outrageous reason for them to do a welfare check, even going so far as to tell them that I was going to kill my children. I opened the door of my house to find the officers in a posture that led me to believe I was going to get shot. I don't necessarily blame them, as they were thinking that they were going into a volatile situation as Nicholas had tried to convey. I was reading a book on the couch that day and the children were safe, as they always were.

and staff that exist to help people truly in need of help and services offered. The courts are also abused by constant lawfare of this nature as well. There is a paper trail for these types of abusers, and it should not be difficult to provide evidence. Every system in my case was abused. DHHS, OCW, DSER, law enforcement, and the court system.

An ex-parte avenue of short duration should be passed and law enforcement also needs to be able to enforce the custody arrangement of the court order. These two measures alone would significantly reduce the number of exigent cases waiting to be heard. Law enforcement are trained to assess situations and execute the law. Let's let them do that here.

Thank you for your consideration and time. I would be happy to answer any questions that you may have.

K Reynolds
Kecia Reynolds
2 Rustic Ridge Dr. Unit 1
Gorham, ME 04038
(207)347-0950
empressk333@protonmail.com