



MAINE CHIEFS OF POLICE ASSOCIATION

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Statement in Support of L.D. 566, An Act to Provide Funding for Sexual Assault Services March 27, 2023

Senator Baldacci, Representative Meyer, and distinguished members on the Committee on Health and Human Services. My name is Jared Mills, and I am the Chief of the Augusta Police Department. I am submitting testimony on behalf of the Maine Chiefs of Police Association in support of LD 566.

The Mission of the Maine Chiefs of Police is to secure a closer official and personal relationship among Maine Police Officials; to secure a unity of action in law enforcement matters; to enhance the standards of police personnel, police training and police professionalism generally; to devise ways and means for equality of law enforcement throughout the state of Maine; to advance the prevention and detection of crime; to prescribe to the Law Enforcement Code of Ethics; and to promote the profession of law enforcement as an integral and dedicated force in today's society sworn to the protection of life and property.

The bill would increase salaries for sexual assault advocates across the state. The current floor for salaries is 33,500 dollars and this bill would raise that floor to 45,000 dollars.

We are in full support of this increase because sexual assault advocates provide critical support to survivors of sexual assault. These advocates are extremely important partners on sexual assault calls. For example, they are able to inform and reassure the survivor through the investigation and prosecution. This often results in higher levels of cooperation so that the offender is held responsible for their actions which can then reduce levels of secondary trauma for the victim.

We believe that a pay raise is important for a number of reasons, but it is especially important because we need to retain and recruit advocates that are not only qualified to do the work but also have certain attributes that go beyond the training. Not everyone has those attributes like the ability to listen to painful stories and to empower survivors to move through their trauma this takes a certain type of person. We want to make sure that that person is appropriately compensated so that they stay in the job and continue to do their great work in supporting survivors.

This increase will not make anyone rich, but it will show sexual assault advocates that they are appreciated, and their work is valued. So, for these reasons, we ask that you vote ought to pass on LD 566. And, on behalf of the Maine Chiefs of Police Association, we want to thank the committee members for your work on this Committee.