

STATE OF MAINE

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TESTIMONY OF ASSISTANT DISTRICT ATTORNEY ANDREW P. MATULIS

“An Act to Provide Funding for Prosecutor Positions”
Before the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary
Public Hearing Date: March 28, 2023
Testimony in Support of LD 186

Senator Carney, Representative Moonen and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary. My name is Andrew Matulis. I am an Assistant District Attorney in Maine Prosecutorial District 3, and am here to testify in support of LD 186.

For some quick background, I have more than a decade of experience as a prosecutor in Androscoggin County where I have largely focused on prosecuting violent property crimes, domestic violence, and sexual assault cases.

As prosecutors it is our ethical duty to not only act as advocates, but to also ensure the fair and just administration of criminal justice in our State. All of us have taken oaths requiring the faithful discharge of our duties as prosecutors according to the Constitution and laws of Maine. None of us would be doing this work if we did not care deeply about our communities, crime victims, and that justice occurs in every case we handle. I am here to tell you what I have been led to believe everyone here already knows; we can no longer keep up and it is fair to question whether or not what is happening is a violation of our oaths and our ethical duties.

The consequences of the backlog and lack of proper staffing have been immense. Low morale is the new norm at some DA's Offices, and many are working unhealthy hours just to keep up. Burnout is now common and mental health issues abound, as “work-life balance” has become a term used in jest. I stand before you as someone who knows these things first hand. A little more than a year ago, I was working sixty-plus hours a week because I believe that my oath and my ethics don't let me just decide to stop for my own health. The stress and pressure I was putting myself under led to severe depression and anxiety attacks that I had never experienced before. I met with doctors, a therapist, and confided in my wife that something was horrible wrong. Every one of them said the same thing to me; that my lifelong work as a prosecutor, the only thing I have ever done or wanted to do, was making me sick. On the eve of my appointment as the new District Attorney after DA Robinson was elevated to the bench, I went home to my wife and two young kids and had to tell my family that I was resigning immediately before I did damage to myself that I could not fix. It was the saddest day of my life and one I wish I did not feel compelled to tell you about today to impress upon you the enormity of the problem before us.

After a long break, my health has improved to a degree where I have been able to return to the work I love and deeply care about. I turned 40 this month and yesterday I had my yearly physical with my doctor. I told him that I was again a prosecutor. He looked at me with concern and asked me why it would be different this time. All I could say is that I had to try because of the importance of this work. So

here I am today trying to convince you that we are worth helping and that it is in the interests of all the people of this state to ensure that prosecutors have the resources they desperately need.

You know the case numbers, you know that we are doing far more with the same limited resources, and you know that the Defense Bar and the Judiciary have similar problems. I humbly stand before you today asking that you ensure that we have the resources we need to fulfill our oaths, our ethical duties, and to maintain our health so that we can achieve justice for the people of the State of Maine.

It is for these reasons, that I offer my support of LD 186.



Andrew P. Matulis
Assistant District Attorney
Maine Prosecutorial District 3