

Good morning Senator Beebe-Center, Representative Salisbury, and honorable members of the Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety. My name is Dezarae Caron. I am a 44 year old married woman living in Auburn. *I am a survivor of domestic violence and I am here today to testify in support of LD 692 - An Act Regarding Eligibility of County Jail Inmates for a Community Confinement Monitoring Program*

in 2017, I started my own business as a successful nail tech with a large following and have won Best of the Best Nail Salon in Auburn for the last 5 years. I have done nails that have graced the Miss America stage on three separate occasions. I have an amazing 19 year old son who has almost 2000 followers on his YouTube channel where he showcases his guitar skills. In 2013 I met the love of my life and we got married in 2016. Today, I stand before you as Miss Auburn Classic Beauty International 2023. I am happy. I feel safe.

It wasn't always like that.

In 2009, I met someone who changed my world. Not in a good way. I was a 30 year old woman who loved doing mine and my friends nails. When our friends left, I learned that nail polish was not going to be allowed. The smell, after all was too much for them. At first I asked why, then I was taught to not ask. That was the first time my abuser hit me. I could never be a nail tech....I didn't deserve it. I knew this because they told me so.

My sweet little son, just 9 years old. just a few days before his 10th birthday. Double digits. His big day! I was physically held back in another room by them as they screamed at my withdrawn son informing him how little he deserved. That was the day I finally made a report against them. With two black eyes and a son that I needed to keep safe, I had no one. Our "friends" were theirs and were never mine. They had reminded me so many times that I deserved nothing and no one could love me or my son. I was told what I could and couldn't do, and punished when I did not do it right.

I finally got out. It took numerous attempts, supportive people, and physical space. My abuser would always try to get back inside my head. Reminding me why everything I do is wrong and that I don't deserve anyone else.

Well I do deserve someone else. Someone who understands the nightmares. Someone who understands the flinches with sudden movements. Someone who is patient. I have that now. Luckily I also have my life. Some people are not so lucky.

1 in 4 women and 1 in 10 men will have experienced contact sexual violence, physical violence, or stalking by an intimate partner. As many as 38% of all murders of women are committed by intimate

partners. In 2018 and 2019, 43% of all of Maine's homicides were linked to domestic abuse. And a domestic violence assault is reported to law-enforcement every two hours and 22 minutes. Not to mention the ones that don't get reported simply out of fear, or simply that they can't report it because they lost their life to their abuser. These violent domestic abusers have been sentenced to an already limited sentence, they should have to

Serve the full time. These abusers have convinced everyone around them that they are the victim themselves Including the sheriffs. They know what to say.

It takes an average of seven attempts for a survivor to leave their abuser and stay separated for good. Leaving is the most dangerous Time in an abusive relationship. A lot of times when these abusers are getting out of jail, their victim is still trying to Move on. Still trying to find where their safety is. When a victim is trying to overcome the damage done by their abuser, it's easier to stay away when they are locked up. When the end of the sentence is approaching, victims should have plenty of time to prepare for the release of their abuser. A few hours notice is simply not enough to make yourself safe. Let alone if you have children or pets.

Domestic violence is hard enough to solve, we need to do better. We need to hold domestic violence abusers accountable! And we need to protect their victims. Thank you.