

# mecasa

MAINE COALITION AGAINST  
SEXUAL ASSAULT

May 1, 2023

Senator Hickman, Representative Supica, and Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs:

My name is Melissa Martin and I am submitting testimony today on behalf of the Maine Coalition Against Sexual Assault (MECASA), the organization which represents and serves Maine's sexual violence prevention and response programs as well as Maine's Children's Advocacy Centers. MECASA initiates and advocates for victim-centered public policy; provides expert training, technical assistance, and resources for providers and partners; and funds the service providers in your communities.

MECASA is here today in support of LD 1783, An Act to Implement the Recommendations of the Governor's Advisory Council on Military Sexual Trauma. We want to thank Representatives Rielly; Senator Hickman; and Representatives Boyer, Jauch, Malon, Milliken, Montell, Riseman, Rudnicki, and Supica for bringing this legislation.

On a national level, women in the military experience sexual harassment at a rate of 1 in 4 and sexual assault at a rate of 1 in 16,<sup>1</sup> and men in the military experience sexual harassment at a rate of 1 in 16 and sexual assault at a rate of 1 in 143.<sup>2</sup> Although, I would love to give you Maine-specific data, the reality is that it is not currently available. Among other things, this bill would address that.

This bill will make additional data available to the public, including this Committee and Members to the Governor's Advisory Council on Military Sexual Trauma, to help support the Maine National Guard in developing the best policies to support Guard Members during the actual hours

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<sup>1</sup> See [https://www.rand.org/pubs/research\\_reports/RRA1318-1.html](https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RRA1318-1.html)

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

when they are performing their Guard duties but also more generally as they spend the majority of their time in the community.

This bill also provides that when a Guard member reports a sexual assault both they and the person they are reporting will be placed on paid leave until the person reporting the assault has an opportunity to consult with an attorney and make a plan for what they would like to request pending the investigation. This is to address the significant issues with retaliation that were reported immediately after a report of sexual assault. By removing both parties until a plan can be made, we believe this will reduce retaliation and re-traumatization.

Finally, this bill will provide funding to statewide community-based coordination for serving sexual harassment and sexual assault. As the Governor's Advisory Council, the combination of National Guard and community-based providers identified many tasks that needed to be done of the community services side to coordinate community response to National Guard members experiencing sexual violence.

Thank you for your consideration. We hope you will support LD 1783 and would be pleased to answer any questions you might have.

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### About Maine's Sexual Assault Service Providers

One in five Mainers will experience sexual assault at some point in their lifetime.<sup>3</sup> Each year, 14,000 Mainers will experience sexual violence.<sup>4</sup>

Maine's sexual violence service providers provide free and confidential services across the state to victims/survivors of sexual harassment and sexual assault and those close to them, as well as to individuals who wish to increase their understanding of the issues. Just some of the services include a 24-hour statewide sexual assault helpline, crisis intervention and information, support groups, in-person accompaniment and advocacy through the medical and legal systems, and school- and community-based prevention education. Services are provided for a victim/survivor regardless of when they experienced sexual violence, and regardless of what type of sexual violence they experienced. Types of sexual violence include, but are not limited to, sexual

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<sup>3</sup> Dumont, R. & Shaler, G. (2015). *Maine Crime Victimization Report: Informing public policy for safer communities*. Muskie School of Public Service, University of Southern Maine.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

harassment and gender-based bullying, child sexual abuse, elder sexual abuse, stalking, sex trafficking, and sexual violence within an intimate partner relationship.

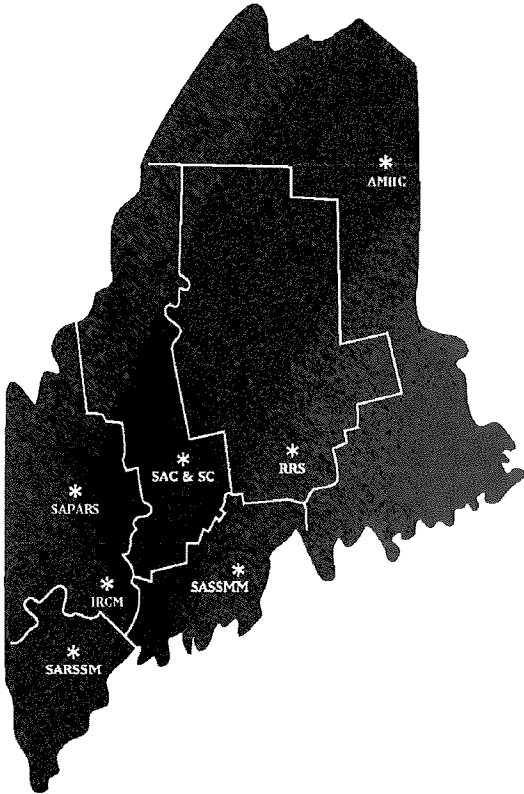
*24/7 Confidential*

*Maine Sexual Assault Helpline: 1-800-871-7741*

# mecasa

MAINE COALITION AGAINST  
SEXUAL ASSAULT

info@mecasa.org | mecasa.org  
207-626-0034



STATEWIDE  
SEXUAL ASSAULT HELPLINE  
1-800-871-7741

Free. Private. 24/7.

## MAINE'S SEXUAL ASSAULT SUPPORT CENTERS

### AMHC Sexual Assault Services (AMHC)

Serving Aroostook, Hancock, & Washington Counties •  
amhcsexualassaultservices.org

### Immigrant Resource Center of Maine

Serving Androscoggin & Cumberland Counties • ircofmaine.org

### Rape Response Services (RRS)

Serving Penobscot & Piscataquis Counties • rrsonline.org

### Sexual Assault Prevention & Response Services (SAPARS)

Serving Androscoggin, Oxford & Franklin Counties and the towns of  
Bridgton & Harrison • sapars.org

### Sexual Assault Crisis & Support Center (SAC & SC)

Serving Kennebec & Somerset Counties • silentnomore.org

### Sexual Assault Response Services of Southern Maine (SARSSM)

Serving Cumberland & York Counties • sarsonline.org

### Sexual Assault Support Services of Midcoast Maine (SASSMM)

Serving Eastern Cumberland, Sagadahoc, Knox, Waldo & Lincoln  
Counties • sassmm.org

## MORE SEXUAL VIOLENCE SERVICES

Maine TransNet • mainetrans.net • info@mainetransnet.org

Wabanaki Women's Coalition • wabanakiwomenscoalition.org  
207-763-3478

Aroostook Band of Micmacs, Domestic & Sexual Violence  
Advocacy Center • 207-551-3639

Houlton Band of Maliseets, Domestic & Sexual Violence  
Advocacy Center • 207-532-6401

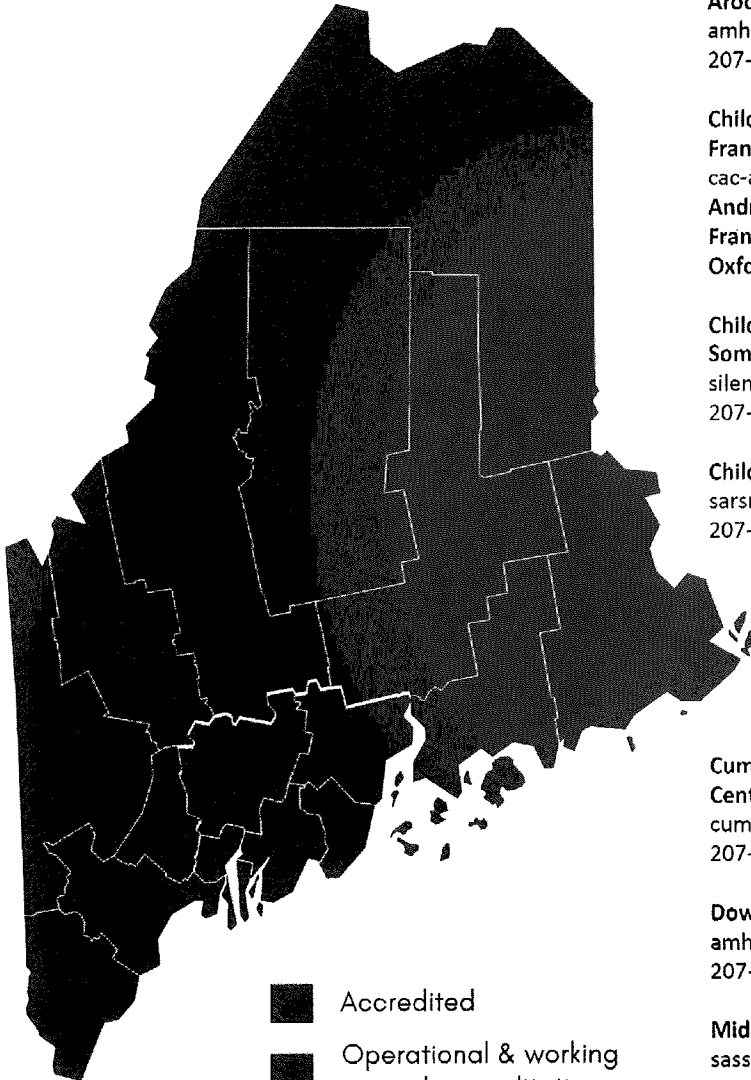
Indian Township Passamaquoddy, Domestic & Sexual  
Violence Advocacy Center • 207-214-1917



Passamaquoddy Peaceful Relations • 1-877-853-2613

Penobscot Indian Nation, Domestic & Sexual Violence  
Advocacy Center • 207-631-4886



# Maine's Children's Advocacy Centers



 Accredited  
 Operational & working toward accreditation

**Aroostook County Children's Advocacy Center**  
 amhcsas.org  
 207-472-6134

**Children's Advocacy Center of Androscoggin, Franklin, and Oxford Counties**  
 cac-af0.org  
**Androscoggin:** 207-784-0436  
**Franklin:** 207-778-9777  
**Oxford:** 207-739-1228

**Children's Advocacy Center of Kennebec & Somerset Counties**  
 silentnomore.org/about-our-cac  
 207-861-4491

**Children's Advocacy Center of York County**  
 sarsmm.org  
 207-459-2380

**Cumberland County Children's Advocacy Center**  
 cumberlandcountycac.org  
 207-879-6160

**Downeast Children's Advocacy Center**  
 amhcsas.org  
 207-255-3687

**Midcoast Children's Advocacy Center**  
 sassmm.org  
 207-522-7162

**Penquis Children's Advocacy Center**  
 penquiscac.org  
 207-974-2469