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Testimony of Rep. Rebecca Jauch in support of
**LD 1783, An Act to Implement the Recommendations of the Governor's
Advisory Council on Military Sexual Trauma**
before the Joint Standing Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs

Good morning, Senator Hickman, Representative Supica, and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs. My name is Rebecca Jauch and I represent House District 51 which is the majority of Topsham. I am pleased to be here today to testify in support of **LD 1783, An Act to Implement the Recommendations of the Governor's Advisory Council on Military Sexual Trauma**.

I am testifying before you today not only as a co-sponsor of this bill, but also as a female veteran who has a deep appreciation of the problem of sexual harassment and sexual assault in the military. These problems are not new – most female service members I know have either experienced sexual harassment or assault personally or know a colleague who has. As you have heard, LD 1783 implements recommendations from the Governor's Advisory Council. This council was charged with looking at the problem and coming up with solutions, and it is up to us as a legislative body to enact those recommendations.

In addition to implementing those recommendations, LD 1783 recognizes and addresses the delicate situation that service members may find themselves in after making a report. It takes a lot of courage and determination to come forward and make a report of sexual harassment or assault, no matter where you work, but it can be particularly daunting in the National Guard where you are often a member of a small, closeknit team. Having to continue to work in that kind of environment while an investigation is underway is unreasonable and can be a deterrent to reporting the sexual misconduct in the first place. Giving the reporting service member the option of paid leave during the investigation is a meaningful way to show we as a state and a community acknowledge the problem and support the reporter.

When I served in the Army National Guard we always used to say "One Team, One Fight," meaning we are all on the same team and we are all working together on the same mission. Passing LD 1783 will go a long way to healing some of the problems that have long been

brushed under the rug in the military. Passing LD 1783 will put us on the path of truly being One Team unified behind One Fight.

Thank you for your time and consideration today and I welcome any questions.