

**Testimony of Brunswick, Cape Elizabeth, Cumberland, Cumberland County Sheriff's Office,  
Falmouth, Freeport, Gorham, Portland, Scarborough, South Portland, Westbrook, Windham,  
Yarmouth Police Departments  
In Support of LD 2084, An Act to Provide Funding for Essential Services for Victims of Crime  
Before the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary  
January 12, 2023**

Senator Carney, Representative Moonen, and distinguished members of the Judiciary Committee, the following law enforcement departments in Cumberland County: Brunswick, Cape Elizabeth, Cumberland, Falmouth, Freeport, Gorham, Portland, Scarborough, South Portland, Westbrook, Windham, Yarmouth and Cumberland County Sheriff's Office, are writing in support of LD 2084 and the need for funding to maintain essential victim services in Maine.

Through These Doors, the domestic violence resource center in Cumberland County, Maine established the ***Enhanced Police Intervention Collaboration (EPIC)*** program with three local law enforcement departments in 2009. The goals of the program were to build a solid coordinated community response between the local domestic violence advocacy program and law enforcement departments to support survivors, hold offenders accountable, and to address gaps in systems that support these goals. Domestic violence advocates (EPIC Advocates) were assigned to collaborate with police departments to provide in-person follow-up services when a domestic violence crime was reported.

Since the inception of this program, TTD has expanded the EPIC program to partner with every law enforcement department in Cumberland County. This program receives domestic violence, dating violence, stalking, and sex trafficking reports after a report has been generated (arrest or no arrest reports). TTD has provided in-person partner advocacy services or phone follow-up services to thousands of survivors through this one program since 2009.

Domestic violence resource centers across the State of Maine are facing drastic cuts through the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) funding that directly supports critical domestic violence advocacy and support services. If Through These Doors is forced to reduce victim services, the EPIC program would not be offered to survivors and their children residing in Cumberland County. In addition, trainings offered to law enforcement in Cumberland County such as the "Responding to Non-Fatal Strangulation" and other on-going domestic violence-related trainings would not be offered to help support law enforcement in receiving the current education re: how to best respond to survivors in domestic violence, dating violence, stalking, and/or sex trafficking.

Survivors are asked to provide feedback to TTD and our departments regularly since 2009 to ensure quality programming. They are routinely asked if:

- Did the Enhanced Police intervention Collaboration services help increase their safety plan?
- Would they call the local police department again if needed?

An overwhelming average of 90% of survivors answered YES to both answers consistently throughout the span of this programming. It should be noted that many of the survivors who utilize the EPIC program were not accessing or aware of their local domestic violence resources before contacting their local law enforcement.

Departments of Cumberland County are in support of LD 2084. If the EPIC program and other victim services programs are cut and not funded through this bill, many survivors and their children will not have the coordinated community response advocacy and law enforcement services offered to provide options, safety, and support to live a life without violence within their home and/or relationship.

Thank you for your consideration.

Chief Scott Stewart, Brunswick Police Department  
Chief Paul Fenton, Cape Elizabeth Police Department  
Chief Charles Rumsey, Cumberland Police Department  
Sheriff Kevin Joyce, Cumberland County Sheriff's Office  
Chief John F. Kilbride, Falmouth Police Department  
Chief Nathaniel Goodman, Freeport Police Department  
Chief Chris Sanborn, Gorham Police Department  
Chief Mark Dubois, Portland Police Department  
Chief Mark A. Holmquist, Scarborough Police Department  
Chief Daniel J. Ahern, South Portland Police Department  
Chief Sean Lally, Westbrook Police Department  
Chief Kevin Scholfield, Windham Police Department  
Chief Dan Gallant, Yarmouth Police Department