

Testimony of Adrianna Rodriguez
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 23, 2024

Senator Carney, Representative Moonen, and distinguished members of the Judiciary Committee, my name is Adrianna Rodriguez, I am from York County, and I am writing in support of LD 2084.

Caring Unlimited... you'd think it was just a name. That name has meaning and rawness behind it. It's really very much so is just that... Caring Unlimited. Caring for you no matter what. No matter where you came from, how many kids you have, how much money you don't have, how traumatized you are.. Unlimited empowerment. I spent a year in their transitional housing program. One year: that's all it took for me to gain confidence, to reclaim my independence, to feel whole, to bring not only myself but my three children peace! After 9 plus years of feeling so hopeless, so sad, lost and stuck. I thought I would never be able to do this life with three kids alone. I was conditioned to believe that.

Caring Unlimited changed my entire life. They look me and my kids in and treated me as an individual, a woman with feelings. They picked me up off my back... shook me off and paved every single step with love, comfort, and most importantly safety! I never for a second after entering my apartment felt scared, felt alone or uncomfortable. I mean, they made sure I absolutely had zero need for my abuser. They made me see the worth within myself and gave me the strength to do this alone.

As I sit in my very own beautiful apartment a year later with just me and my kids filled with love and joy, with the continued support of Caring Unlimited as I take the steps in this chapter, making sure I have any and everything needed to start the next part of life with peace and confidence... for just a moment, I want to bring to your attention how serious domestic violence truly is. An estimated 1.3 million women are victims of domestic violence. Over three women a day are murdered by their partner due to domestic violence, most cases of DV are not even reported to the police. Can you believe on a typical day there are more than 20,000 phone calls placed to organizations like Caring Unlimited?

Imagine being so low so scared and not having that number to call. To have children with no family support wanting to run, wanting to be free, and not have the ability to call that hotline to reach for someone. I just can't express how devastating it would be to women in the state of Maine who are scared, alone with their backs against the wall to not have a SAFE place to lay your head down and feel completely okay, alone after years of abuse. To have that support. To have that help.

I feel it's so important to continue this safety net for anyone that's going through domestic violence be able to receive this amazing resource that not only rescued me but my kids. The advocates never failed me, from giving me a stamp to helping me get all the information to start school again. I will never forget this program. It was an absolute blessing. It is exactly what it was designed for. It did not fail me. I pray anyone who is stuck, or feels hopeless still gets to have that opportunity to receive the life changing benefits Caring Unlimited provides! That they too get a chance like mine. A chance to stand strong and be free.