

Testimony in Favor of LD 2084
January 23, 2023

Senator Carney, Representative Moonen, and distinguished members of the Judiciary Committee, my name is Stephanie Hartley, I live in Lewiston.

Safe Voices has been key to me standing on my own two feet as a person.

I remember clear as day abuse at the early as the age of 4 years old. It doesn't surprise me today, at age 52, looking back at my whole life and (now) understanding how I behaved, lived and accepted dysfunctional behavior. Therefore, living life in domestic violence appeared normal to me and what I deserve.

I believe Safe Voices is very crucial to stay in place. I believe in standing here to speak on how it is our State of Maine's duty to stand for what Safe Voices encourages in our people.

Safe Voices pulls people out of domestic violence, supports people to stand on their own two feet again, or for their first time ever.

Supporting Safe Voices creates healthier people with healthier lifestyles: stronger people, not beaten down. Belief and faith-restored people who want to live up to their potential. In the grand scheme, Maine's people will strive and work and not stay down.

I was asked to speak briefly of how Safe Voices helped me personally:

- They would answer my call, at any hour for two years before I left my domestic violence home.
- They got me a bus ticket out of my domestic violence home in November 8, 2022.
- They gave me shelter, clothing, food, every resource to seek my own home, steps towards getting an education, and job counseling to help myself.
- They also helped me with legal matters to protect me, assisting me with how to get and put a PFA in place.
- They connected me with the Volunteer Lawyers Project for all other legal matters.

I thank Safe Voices for being my backbone when I had none. There were no services for my mom when she went through this. I believe their organization will help build a strong Maine people, and I ask you to make sure that Safe Voices and other victim services have the funding they need to do so.