

131st Legislature
Senate of
Maine
Senate District 23

Senator Mattie Daughtry
Assistant Majority Leader
3 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333-0003
Office (207) 287-1515

Testimony of Senator Mattie Daughtry supporting
LD 2084, An Act to Provide Funding for Essential Services for
Victims of Crimes
Before the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary
January 23, 2024

Senator Carney, Representative Moonen, and Esteemed Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary, my name is Mattie Daughtry, and I proudly represent Senate District 23, which includes Brunswick, Freeport, Harpswell, Pownal, Chebeague Island, and part of Yarmouth. Today I am happy to testify in strong support of LD 2084, “An Act to Provide Funding for Essential Services for Victims of Crimes.”

Since 1984, the federal Victims of Crimes Act (VOCA) has provided critical funding for services to the victims of crimes, including civil and criminal legal services, advocacy, and financial support. This funding helps victims participate in the justice process – which we all know can be costly, complicated, and hard – and get their lives back on track. It also helps victims heal from the hurt and pain of their experiences.

In the past year, even with flat funding, the Victims of Crime Fund has supported almost 50,000 social, legal, and other services for survivors. Looking ahead, in 2025, there will be a shortfall in the federal VOCA funding, which will result in \$5.9 million fewer dollars for essential services to the victims of crime in Maine. According to the Bangor Daily News, the Maine Coalition to End Domestic Violence is projected to lose \$2.9 million next fiscal year, which is 30 percent of its annual revenue that it mostly passes on to local domestic violence resource centers.¹ In my district, the Midcoast Children’s Advocacy Center relies almost entirely on VOCA funding.

Cuts in VOCA funding at a time when demand for services are increasing will result in drastic reductions in available services unless this Committee – and the entire Legislature – take action to fill these funding gaps. All of our New England neighbors have already taken this important step, and I hope that Maine will follow.

I urge the Committee to vote “Ought to Pass” on LD 2084 so that Maine can continue provide critical services to the survivors of crimes, especially victims of abuse and violence.

¹ <https://www.bangordailynews.com/2024/01/10/mainefocus/victim-services-maine-60-percent-funding-cut-joam40zk0w/>