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**MAINE COALITION AGAINST
SEXUAL ASSAULT**

January 24, 2024

Senator Carney, Representative Moonen, and Members of the Joint Standing Committee on the Judiciary:

My name is Melissa Martin and I am submitting testimony today on behalf of the Maine Coalition Against Sexual Assault (MECASA), the organization which represents and serves Maine's sexual violence prevention and response programs as well as Maine's Children's Advocacy Centers. MECASA initiates and advocates for victim-centered public policy; provides expert training, technical assistance, and resources for providers and partners; and funds the service providers in your communities.

MECASA is here today in support of LD 2103, An Act to Protect Victims of Domestic Abuse and Violence by Amending the Law Regarding Proximity Restrictions in Final Protection from Abuse Orders. Thank you to Senator Rafferty, Representative Dodge, Senators Baldacci, Carney, Curry, Daughtry, Ingwersen, and Pierce and Representatives Sargent and Sheehan for sponsoring this legislation.

I want to address specifically about why this bill is important to survivors of sexual violence.

Sexual violence is rarely committed by someone who is a stranger to the victim. In fact, only about 7% of those who are sexually assaulted are harmed by a stranger. The vast majority of situations of sexual harm involve a person known to the victim. That means that in sexual violence cases, it is not uncommon that a survivor is seeking a protection order against a coworker, classmate, or someone else that will continue to be present in their life. Therefore, it is incredibly important to give the court tools to make the order as specific as possible to meet the unique needs of each individual situation.

The specific relief available through this bill—a distance requirement and prohibition on being present at a specific location—would be useful to survivors in a variety of situations. For example, if parties work for the same employer, but one works days and the other works nights, this would allow the court to order that the defendant may not be present during the time the plaintiff is working.

In cases involving students at the same school, the court could also be similarly specific. For example, the court might find it appropriate to order a defendant who attends high school not to be present at volleyball games if the plaintiff plays on that team or the court might order the defendant to stay five feet away from the plaintiff when they are in the hallway together. If two students attend the same college in Maine, the court might order that the defendant not be present in the plaintiff's dorm.

Having these specific boundaries outlined in a protection order can increase the clarity and expectations of the order and decrease future issues and returns to court to seek a more specific order.

For these reasons, we support the bill and the sponsor amendment. Thank you for your consideration. We hope you will support LD 2103 and would be pleased to answer any questions you might have.

About Maine's Sexual Assault Service Providers

One in five Mainers will experience sexual assault at some point in their lifetime.¹ Each year, 14,000 Mainers will experience sexual violence.²

Maine's sexual violence service providers provide free and confidential services across the state to victims/survivors of sexual harassment and sexual assault and those close to them, as well as to individuals who wish to increase their understanding of the issues. Just some of the services include a 24-hour statewide sexual assault helpline, crisis intervention and information, support groups, in-person accompaniment and advocacy through the medical and legal systems, and school- and community-based prevention education. Services are provided for a victim/survivor regardless of when they experienced sexual violence, and regardless of what type of sexual violence they experienced. Types of sexual violence include, but are not limited to, sexual harassment and gender-based bullying, child sexual abuse, elder sexual abuse, stalking, sex trafficking, and sexual violence within an intimate partner relationship.

24/7 Confidential
Maine Sexual Assault Helpline: 1-800-871-7741

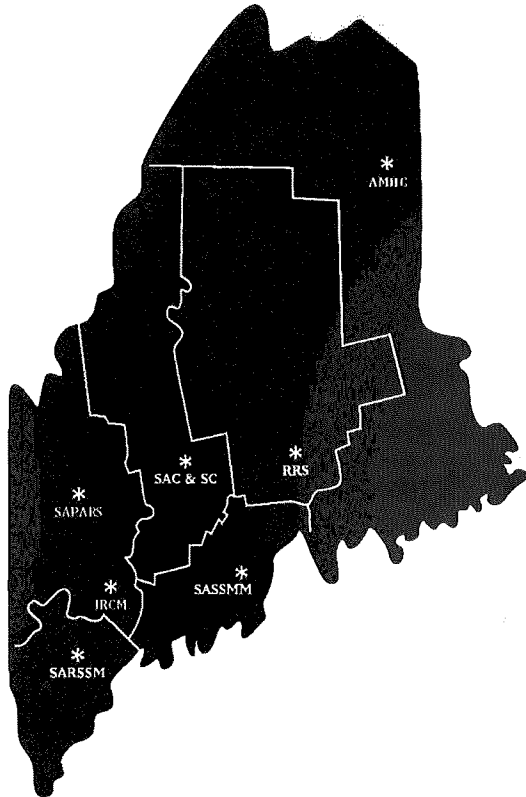
¹ Dumont, R. & Shaler, G. (2015). *Maine Crime Victimization Report: Informing public policy for safer communities*. Muskie School of Public Service, University of Southern Maine.

² *Ibid.*

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MAINE COALITION AGAINST
SEXUAL ASSAULT

info@mecasa.org | mecasa.org
207-626-0034



STATEWIDE
SEXUAL ASSAULT HELPLINE
1-800-871-7741

Free. Private. 24/7.

MAINE'S SEXUAL ASSAULT SUPPORT CENTERS

AMHC Sexual Assault Services (AMHC)

Serving Aroostook, Hancock, & Washington Counties •
amhcsexualassaultservices.org

Immigrant Resource Center of Maine

Serving Androscoggin & Cumberland Counties • ircofmaine.org

Rape Response Services (RRS)

Serving Penobscot & Piscataquis Counties • rrsonline.org

Sexual Assault Prevention & Response Services (SAPARS)

Serving Androscoggin, Oxford & Franklin Counties and the towns of
Bridgton & Harrison • sapars.org

Sexual Assault Crisis & Support Center (SAC & SC)

Serving Kennebec & Somerset Counties • silentnomore.org

Sexual Assault Response Services of Southern Maine (SARSSM)

Serving Cumberland & York Counties • sarsonline.org

Sexual Assault Support Services of Midcoast Maine (SASSMM)

Serving Eastern Cumberland, Sagadahoc, Knox, Waldo & Lincoln
Counties • sassmm.org

MORE SEXUAL VIOLENCE SERVICES

Maine TransNet • mainetrans.net • info@mainetransnet.org

Wabanaki Women's Coalition • wabanakiwomenscoalition.org
207-763-3478

Aroostook Band of Micmacs, Domestic & Sexual Violence
Advocacy Center • 207-551-3639

Houlton Band of Maliseets, Domestic & Sexual Violence
Advocacy Center • 207-532-6401

Indian Township Passamaquoddy, Domestic & Sexual
Violence Advocacy Center • 207-214-1917

Passamaquoddy Peaceful Relations • 1-877-853-2613

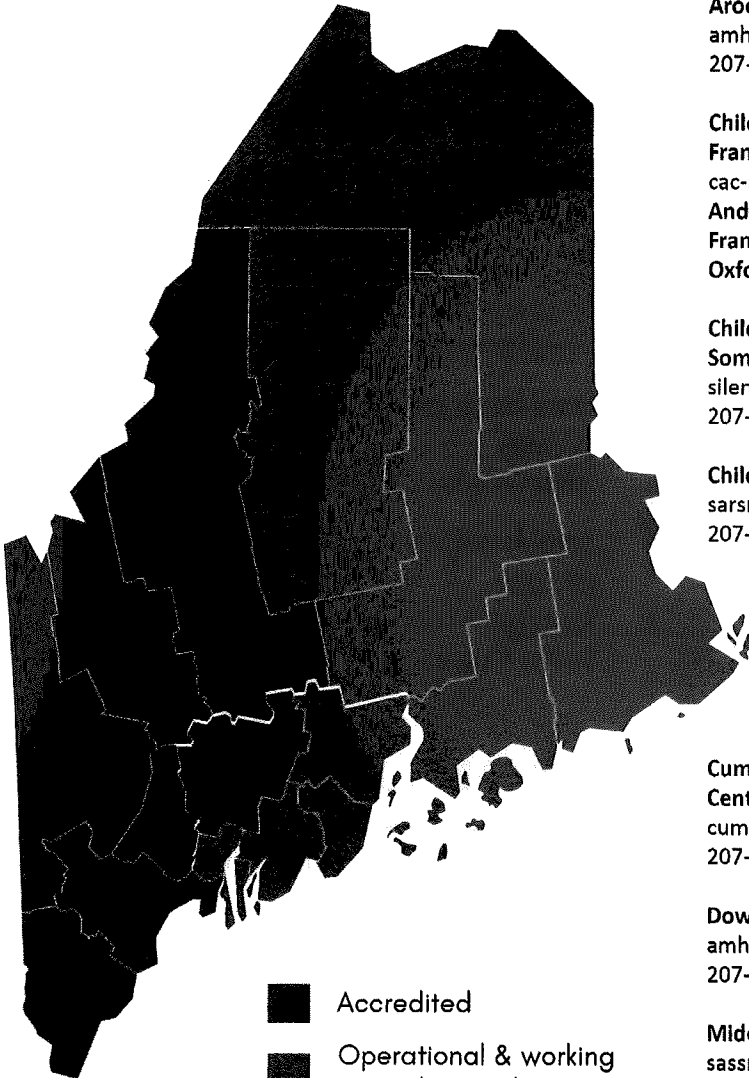
Penobscot Indian Nation, Domestic & Sexual Violence
Advocacy Center • 207-631-4886



MAINE NETWORK OF

CHILDREN'S ADVOCACY CENTERS

Maine's Children's Advocacy Centers



- Accredited
- Operational & working toward accreditation

Aroostook County Children's Advocacy Center
 amhcsas.org
 207-472-6134

Children's Advocacy Center of Androscoggin, Franklin, and Oxford Counties
 cac-afco.org
 Androscoggin: 207-784-0436
 Franklin: 207-778-9777
 Oxford: 207-739-1228

Children's Advocacy Center of Kennebec & Somerset Counties
 silentnomore.org/about-our-cac
 207-861-4491

Children's Advocacy Center of York County
 sarsmm.org
 207-459-2380

Cumberland County Children's Advocacy Center
 cumberlandcountycac.org
 207-879-6160

Downeast Children's Advocacy Center
 amhcsas.org
 207-255-3687

Midcoast Children's Advocacy Center
 sassmm.org
 207-522-7162

Penquis Children's Advocacy Center
 penquiscac.org
 207-974-2469