



LEGAL SERVICES
FOR MAINE ELDERS

Free Legal Help for Older Mainers



MCEDV.

The Maine Coalition
to End Domestic Violence



February 27, 2024

Senator Rotundo, Senator Baldacci, Representative Sachs, Representative Meyer, and Members of the Joint Standing Committees on Health and Human Services and Appropriations and Financial Affairs:

My name is Melissa Martin, and I am submitting testimony today on behalf of a coalition of organizations who provide services, support and advocacy for crime victims across Maine in favor of the Purchased Social Services portion of the budget, specifically the \$6 million dollar allocation to fill the VOCA gap. We encourage this Committee adopt the language of LD 2084, as attached to this testimony, as an amendment to the budget. This amended bill language is the result of a lengthy hearing in which the Judiciary Committee carefully considered the testimony and struck a balance between one time and ongoing funding for VOCA. The result is carefully crafted language that will specifically allocate state funds only to fill any gaps in federal funding. In other words, the impact is solely to keep current victim services flat funded. This language received a unanimous vote by the Judiciary Committee.

During that hearing, the Judiciary Committee heard extensive testimony about the impact victim services had in responding to Lewiston. Victim advocates discussed the many ways they are supporting victims—including everything from attending funerals to sitting with family members when their loved ones' property is returned to them. For those of you who have been listening to the Independent Commission hearings you will have also heard victims discuss how amazing their victim advocates have been in ensuring they had everything they needed in the day and months following this immense tragedy. Chief Justice Wathen, who is chairing the Commission, remarked that it was incredible that any part of this experience would be described as "amazing" and we should hope for all systems responses to work as well as victims services.

In the LD 2084 hearing, the Judiciary Committee also heard testimony from a variety of domestic violence and sexual assault survivors and the advocates that work with them about how essential these services are. One domestic violence survivor discussed the variety of supports her domestic violence advocate provided her, including giving her the advocate's own shoes when hers were falling apart during a court hearing. One parent of a student sexually assaulted at school talked about how important and life changing sexual assault services were for her family.

Simply put, victim services save and change lives. They are essential when the unimaginable happens in our communities and in our state. We are asking you to amend the budget to ensure these services are not crippled. Thank you for your consideration. We would be pleased to answer any questions you might have.

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L.D. 2084

Date: (Filing No. S-)

JUDICIARY

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**STATE OF MAINE
SENATE
131ST LEGISLATURE
SECOND REGULAR SESSION**

COMMITTEE AMENDMENT " " to S.P. 877, L.D. 2084, "An Act to Provide Funding for Essential Services for Victims of Crimes"

Amend the bill by striking out everything after the enacting clause and inserting the following:

Sec. 1. Appropriations and allocations. The following appropriations and allocations are made.

**HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES, DEPARTMENT OF
Purchased Social Services 0228**

Initiative: Provides ongoing funding to replace anticipated reductions in grants to the department under the federal victim assistance formula grant program administered by the United States Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Office for Victims of Crime, pursuant to the federal Victims of Crime Act of 1984.

GENERAL FUND	2023-24	2024-25
All Other	\$0	\$6,000,000
GENERAL FUND TOTAL	\$0	\$6,000,000

Amend the bill by relettering or renumbering any nonconsecutive Part letter or section number to read consecutively.

SUMMARY

This amendment, which replaces the appropriations and allocations section, clarifies that the ongoing funding is intended to replace anticipated reductions in federal grants to

COMMITTEE AMENDMENT

ROS

COMMITTEE AMENDMENT " " to S.P. 877, L.D. 2084

1 the Department of Health and Human Services pursuant to the federal Victims of Crime
2 Act of 1984.

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FISCAL NOTE REQUIRED

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(See attached)

COMMITTEE AMENDMENT



131st MAINE LEGISLATURE

LD 2084

LR 2908(02)

An Act to Provide Funding for Essential Services for Victims of Crimes

Fiscal Note for Bill as Amended by Committee Amendment " "

Committee: Judiciary

Fiscal Note Required: Yes

Fiscal Note

	FY 2023-24	FY 2024-25	Projections FY 2025-26	Projections FY 2026-27
Net Cost (Savings)				
General Fund	\$0	\$6,000,000	\$6,000,000	\$6,000,000
Appropriations/Allocations				
General Fund	\$0	\$6,000,000	\$6,000,000	\$6,000,000

Fiscal Detail and Notes

This bill includes General Fund appropriations to the Department of Health and Human Services of \$6,000,000 in fiscal year 2024-25 to replace anticipated reductions in grants to the department under the federal Victim Assistance Formula Grant Program administered by United States Department of Justice, Office for Victims of Crime, pursuant to the Victims of Crime Act of 1984.