

mecasa

MAINE COALITION AGAINST SEXUAL ASSAULT

March 5, 2024

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

My name is Elizabeth Ward Saxl, and I am submitting testimony today on behalf of the Maine Coalition Against Sexual Assault (MECASA), the organization that 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 2250 An Act to Allow the Department of Corrections to Comply with the Federal Prison Rape Elimination Act of 2003. Thank you to Senator Carney for introducing this legislation.

This bill will ensure that those who have experienced sexual harassment and sexual assault can access essential and important information about the status of the person who assaulted them - including the work location of the person and the status of any internal or criminal investigation or conviction of the person being investigated. Beyond being essential for compliance with federal law, these pieces of information are absolutely essential for the person who made the report to have in order to engage in their own safety planning and healing.

For those not familiar with the Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) of 2003 (P.L. 108-79)¹, or PREA, it was signed into law on September 4, 2003 by President George W. Bush.² The goal of PREA is to eradicate prisoner rape in all types of correctional facilities in this country.³ As a result of PREA, the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) established the Protecting Inmates and Safeguarding

¹<https://bja.ojp.gov/program/prea/overview#:~:text=Funding%20was%20made%20available%20to,communities%20to%20which%20inmates%20return.>

²<https://bja.ojp.gov/program/prea/overview#:~:text=Funding%20was%20made%20available%20to,communities%20to%20which%20inmates%20return.>

³*Id.*

Communities Program in Fiscal Year (FY) 2004.⁴ The connecting funding was made available to states to support PREA implementation and efforts to prevent and eliminate prisoner rape in state and local prisons, jails, and police lockup facilities and to safeguard the communities to which inmates return.⁵

The elements contained in LD 2250 are necessary to maintain compliance with PREA and to continue to be able to access the \$80,000 of funding that currently helps support PREA implementation in Maine facilities. In particular, this funding allows the Department of Corrections to work closely with our community based sexual assault support centers to help ensure that survivors have access to our 24/7 helpline, in person meetings with advocates, and other forms of supports which are so important in the aftermath of sexual violence.

We hope you will support LD 2250 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.⁶ Each year, 14,000 Mainers will experience sexual violence.⁷

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

⁴ *Id.*

⁵ *Id.*

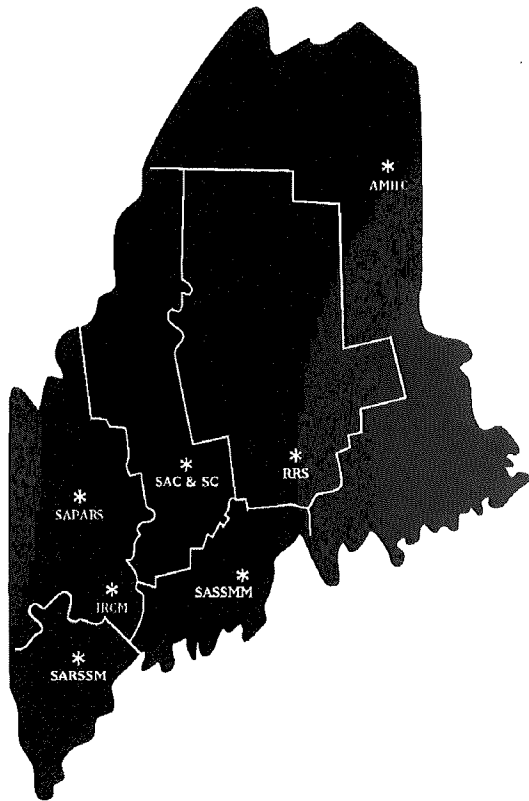
⁶ Dumont, R. & Shaler, G. (2015). *Maine Crime Victimization Report: Informing public policy for safer communities*. Muskie School of Public Service, University of Southern Maine.

⁷ *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

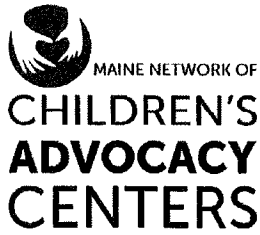
Aroostook Band of Micmacs, Domestic & Sexual Violence
Advocacy Center • 207-551-3639

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

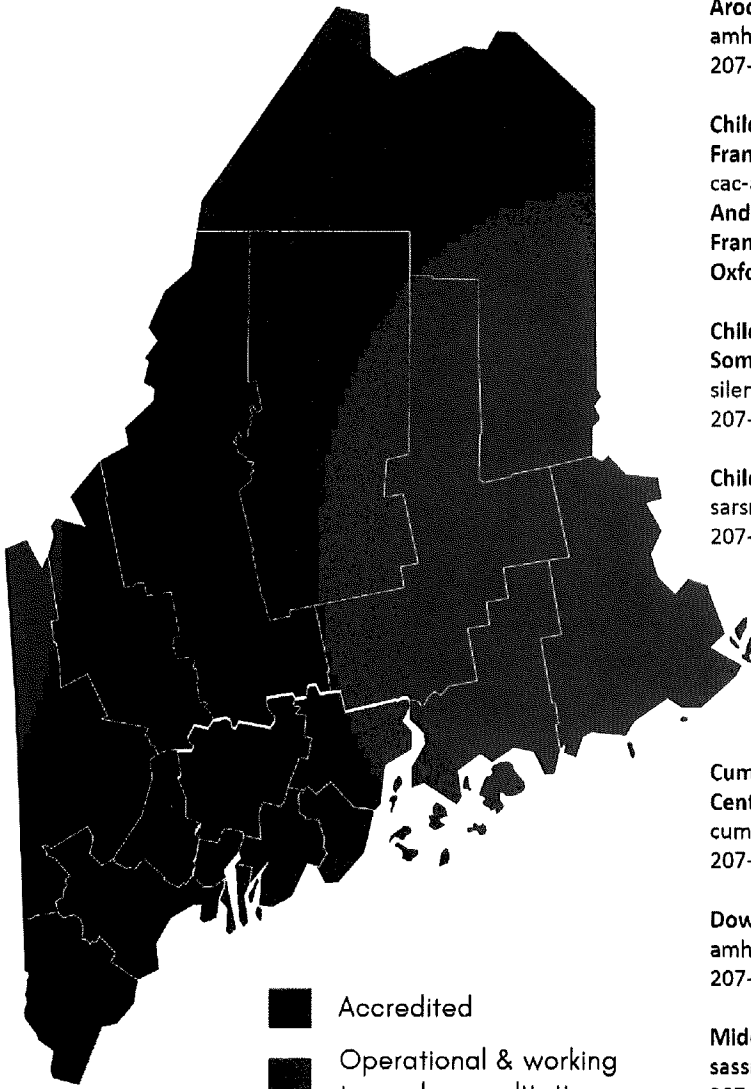
Indian Township Passamaquoddy, Domestic & Sexual
Violence Advocacy Center • 207-214-1917

Passamaquoddy Peaceful Relations • 1-877-853-2613

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



Maine's Children's Advocacy Centers



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