



The Maine Coalition  
to End Domestic Violence

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**Testimony of Francine Garland Stark, on behalf of the Maine Coalition to End Domestic Violence  
LD 210 – An Act Making Unified Appropriations and Allocations from the General Fund and Other  
Funds for the Expenditures of State Government and Changing Certain Provisions of the Law  
Necessary to the Proper Operations of State Government for the Fiscal Years Ending June 30, 2025,  
June 30, 2026 and June 30, 2027.**

Senator Rotundo, Representative Gattine, and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs, I am writing on behalf of the Maine Coalition to End Domestic Violence regarding LD 210 to support resources to the Department of Corrections Office of Victim Services for Maine's Certified Domestic Violence Intervention Programs.

Maine's network of Certified Domestic Violence Intervention Programs (CDVIP) is an essential part of our coordinated community response to domestic violence, one of the primary drivers of violent crime in Maine. The criminal code recognizes these proven, evidence-based programs as *the most effective community-based intervention* to domestic violence. And state law requires Maine courts to order these programs in all cases where a person is sentenced to probation for a domestic violence crime.

The Maine Department of Corrections oversees certification of these programs. Since 2019, MCEDV has worked closely with the MDOC to provide statewide coordination, technical assistance and training, and quality assurance monitoring. The Biennial Budget Proposal maintains \$287,500 in the Department of Corrections annually to go towards supporting Maine's CDVIPs – but this is not enough to sustain these programs, nor does it provide enough funds to reimburse programs for all eligible, court-ordered, indigent participants.

While appreciated, this small pot of funding only partially supports training and oversight of these programs and provides a limited partial fee reimbursement program for indigent program participants. This funding is insufficient, and without adequate investment, these critical community programs will continue to close, one by one. When this limited funding was first allocated, the hope was that the reimbursement of reduced fees would work towards stabilizing and sustaining the financial resources of the CDVIP network, while helping to eliminate income as a factor in criminal legal outcomes. These programs have historically relied almost entirely on participant fees for their operating costs.

While this limited state funding has helped increase access for people with very low incomes, it has not been the operational solution as hoped. Programs struggle to keep their doors open. In

**fact, three programs have shuttered in the last 18 months, leaving three Maine counties without programming.**

MCEDV has worked with all of Maine's CDVIP and partnering domestic violence resource centers to determine a level of funding that would support ongoing and sustainable operation these programs statewide. That total annual cost is \$2,500,000. We urge you to recognize the fiscal wisdom of this investment and to show your support for survivors, their children, and all of Maine's communities by including as much as possible of that \$2,500,000 in the biennial budget.

Maine's Certified Domestic Violence Intervention Programs are a fiscally responsible and necessary investment for many reasons, including:

**CDVIP increases the safety of survivors and children.** Maine survivors report increased safety when participants attend and complete CDVIP.

**CDVIP is in existing law.** Existing state statute recognizes these programs as "the most appropriate and effective community-based intervention in cases of domestic abuse" and requires Maine's courts to order those convicted of domestic violence to complete these programs.

**CDVIP reduces recidivism.** MCEDV's 2024 CDVIP Survivor Impact Survey<sup>ii</sup> showed that 77% of those who completed CDVIP were not subsequently arrested.

**CDVIP increases survivor safety.** MCEDV's 2024 CDVIP Survivor Impact Survey also showed 52% of survivors reported an improvement in areas related to physical safety and freedom from violence.

**CDVIP prevents homicides.** Domestic abuse is connected to approximately half of all homicides in Maine each year.<sup>iii</sup> Maine's CDVIPs aim to challenge and change the beliefs that allow abusive behaviors, including key lethality indicators, like stalking, strangulation, sexual assault, suicidality, and serial battering. As one survivor said in MCEDV's 2024 survey, "*Keep doing these classes because there are a lot of ladies that wouldn't be here otherwise.*"

**CDVIP is cost-effective.** The cost of providing 48 weeks of 90-minute classes is substantially less than the cost of incarceration. The cost savings are even greater when the reduction in subsequent violence and injury and impacts on long term mental and behavioral health of victims are considered.

**CDVIP improves oversight and supervision of people who have committed DV.** CDVIP works closely with the system partners that refer participants to their programs to ensure accurate information and swift and certain consequences for non-compliance.

**CDVIP is a community-based pathway for [something lefty but true].** Each week, there are 48 DV intervention classes offered by staff from the communities they serve. Interventionists are committed to engaging with participants respectfully and with a belief in their capacity for change. Common misconceptions are that these are "shame and blame" programs or "support groups for abusers." They are neither. Instead, they offer an opportunity for people



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who have harmed those closest to be accountable, to examine their behaviors and beliefs, to choose to change, and to take steps to repair the harm they've caused.

Maine law already recognizes the need for and the efficacy of these programs, and it is time to invest in them for the good of our communities, including the survivors and their children who rely on this trusted intervention as a pathway for supporting the safe and free future they deserve.

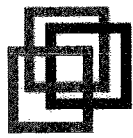
Francine Garland Stark, Executive Director  
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<sup>i</sup> [Title 17-A, §1501: Purposes](#)

<sup>ii</sup> [Maine Certified Domestic Intervention Programs: 2019-2024, MCEDV. CDVIP 5yr Report Summary 1.21.25.pdf](#)

<sup>iii</sup> [Maine Domestic Abuse Homicide Review Panel Reports: Office of the Maine AG: News: Domestic Abuse Homicide Review Panel Reports Archive](#)



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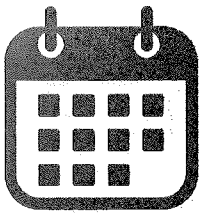
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# Certified Domestic Violence Intervention Programs

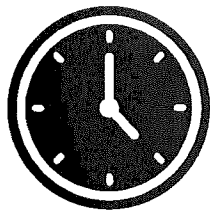
## Maine must invest in Certified Domestic Violence Intervention Programs.

Maine's Certified Domestic Violence Intervention Programs (CDVIPs) have one goal: ending domestic abuse. They improve the safety of survivors and hold those who abuse them responsible for the harm done. With no consistent funding for operational costs, several programs recently closed. Others are barely keeping their doors open, despite their value to survivors and public safety.

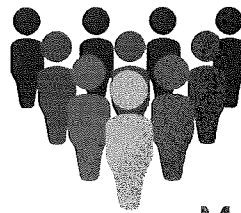
### What are CDVIPs?



**48** Weeks  
of Classes



**90** Minute  
Classes



**1,100** Men  
Enrolled  
Annually



**90** Women  
Enrolled  
Annually

Maine believes in CDVIPs. It's in our laws. Maine law recognizes CDVIPs as "the most appropriate and effective community intervention in cases involving domestic violence." (17-A MRS § 1501(9)). Courts are required to order CDVIPs in all domestic abuse cases, unless there is a specific reason not to. (17-A MRS § 1807(4)). The State has never provided sufficient resources to carry out this legislative intent.

*I think it's incredibly necessary for this program to continue and that people who harm their loved ones are made to complete the course so that they can learn and be held accountable for their actions. This program has really changed things for the better.*

*- Survivor*



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Connecting People, Creating Frameworks for Change.

[www.mcedv.org](http://www.mcedv.org)

## CDVIPs address domestic abuse at the root.

Abuse happens because the perpetrator believes it's okay. Abuse is not caused by anger, so anger management doesn't work to stop it, yet prior to Maine's laws requiring CDVIPs, anger management classes were the predominant intervention ordered. Maine's CDVIPs ask people who have committed abuse to look at what they have done and why, and they work with them to change both their beliefs and their behaviors.

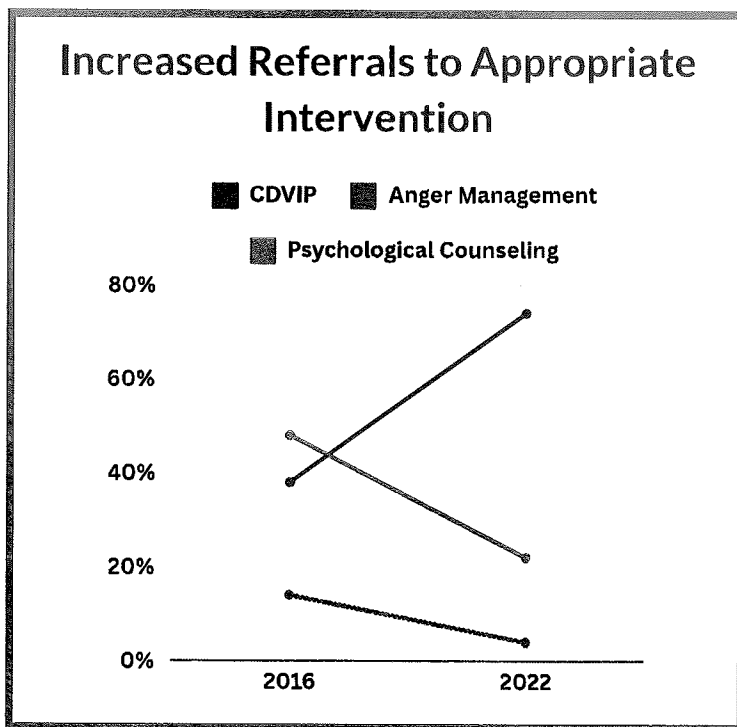
## CDVIPs help survivors.

CDVIPs give survivors information to decide if the person who hurt them will change. Non-compliance and non-completion are clear indicators that positive changes are not being made. Research, including research done right here in Maine, consistently shows that survivors and their children are safer when CDVIPs participants attend and complete the full program.

(Gondolf, Edward. *Batterer Intervention Systems*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2002.)

## CDVIPs are essential to Maine's coordinated community response to domestic abuse and show survivors:

- their community cares about the abuse they experienced.
- response systems work together for their safety.
- the person who hurt them will be held responsible for that harm.
- help for themselves and their children is available.



*I was extremely verbally abusive and I made [my child's mother] feel unsafe. Now my goals are to raise my son differently so his views aren't like that and to change the future a little... I made people feel unsafe and that is not healthy for my child or for anyone to see. - CDVIP Completer*



## MCEDV's 2020 CDVIP Survivor Impact Survey

Affirmed national research that finds violence intervention programs most effective when participants complete the program, and that survivors whose partners dropped out or were expelled from CDVIP reported no improvements in safety.