

Testimony In SUPPORT of

LD 670 An Act to Address Coercive Control In Domestic Abuse Cases, 132 Maine Legislature, First Regular Session, Judiciary, State House rm. 438

March 3, 2025

Dear Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn and members of the Judiciary Committee,

My name is Lori Travis. I am a Maine resident, mother of 3 children living Portland. I am here today to represent my own views in support of LD 670, and not necessary the opinions of my employers.

Thank you for holding this hearing today, I am extremely grateful for the co-authors of this bill to have Coercive Control to be added in Maine's definition of Abuse in MRSA 4102.

I am here to testify today to because I am healing from both physical and non-physical abuse I have experienced.

Imagine someone who is manipulating, blocking, restricting, alienating, intimidating you, exploiting your vulnerabilities, degrading, demeaning, belittling you, destructing your property, threatening your children and pets, excessively monitoring you. How would you feel if you lived with a partner behaving this way on 1 day? Maybe you don't think much of it because the next day their behavior is the opposite, they even prepare a 5-course fresh from the bay dinner and clip the dog's nails. Now imagine you are living with them for 365 days, then 1,095 days, and then on and on until it becomes nearly 6,000 days of abusive-yet-seemingly nice-yet continued abusive behaviors. I don't have to imagine it because this was indeed every behavior exhibited by my previous partner of 16 years.

When you are physically pushed down to the ground you may cry in pain, have a bruise or worse a bleed, and if hard enough your bones could break. Your brain is a part of your body and when you get pushed down emotionally, or mentally your brain hurts, it can feel bruised, it may eventually break. You begin to not recognize yourself because you were told you were not good enough to be recognized. You were surrounded by so much destructive controlling behavior by your partner your confidence shattered and your freedom to be you destroyed, and like when physically hurt you may cry-scream out in pain. I am lucky though very lucky to be on my healing journey now because I have help, support from amazing people in my community and this great state of Maine.

We cannot afford to have the legal definition of abuse remain solely defined as physical forms of abuse.

Other countries are head of us, with laws on Cohesive Control, such as Australia, and Europe. There are 10-15 other states with expanded abuse definitions containing cohesive control language, for example Massachusetts, Connecticut, California, Hawaii, and Washington. Maine is amazing! And we need to delve into our amazingness and work together to make big changes and make the lives our residents better in a major way. Let's join with other states, and bring LD 670 into law. If enacted Maine residents will be increasingly empowered to rise up against this form of abuse and rediscover freedom and regain their confidence that was once stolen away. Thank you for your consideration.

Lori Travis

Portland, Maine

