

Testimony of Nicole LeProhon

Speaking in Support of LD 666: "An Act to Prevent Domestic Violence by Providing Adequate Funding Support for Court-Ordered Certified Domestic Violence Intervention Programs."

Before the Joint-Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety
Monday, March 3rd, 2025

Senator Beebe-Center, Representative Hasenfus, and honorable members of the Committee,

My name is Nicole LeProhon, and I am a survivor of domestic violence and a former recipient of services from Caring Unlimited. In February 2023, my ex-husband was put on a deferred disposition with the condition that he complete a 48-week Certified Batterer's Program. I advocated for jail time because I didn't believe a class alone would prevent future violence after a violent assault that left me fearing for my life.

However, in April 2023, I received a letter stating that the York County Batterer's Program, Violence No More, was closed. By September, I learned that there were no plans to reopen, and other programs in the state were at capacity. After some effort, I found an available spot at Penquis in Bangor, but my ex-husband's attorney argued during his hearing, that his anger management program should suffice. The prosecutor and I disagreed, emphasizing that anger management was not appropriate for batterers.

Sadly, many others in the courtroom, including several of the 129 men enrolled in Violence No More, faced dismissal due to the closure of the program. These men had caused harm, and their victims were left vulnerable.

I understand that the system is under strain, with limited jail space and funding for programs. But we can do better. At the very least, we must hold abusers accountable by providing education. Victims rarely feel safe once they leave their abuser, as long as the abuser is free.

By November 2024, my ex-husband had completed his 48-week program, and we now have a functional co-parenting relationship. While I feel safer, many victims don't have the support I had. Survivors have been isolated, controlled, and mentally and physically beaten down. We must do more to protect those still living in fear. The bare minimum we can do to hold abusers accountable is to educate them.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my perspective today.

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