

STATE OF MAINE

K. HRYN SLATTERY
DISTRICT I

JACQUELINE SARTORIS
DISTRICT II

NEIL MCLEAN
DISTRICT III

MAEGHAN MALONEY
DISTRICT IV



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R. CHRISTOPHER ALMY
DISTRICT V

NATASHA IRVING
DISTRICT VI

ROBERT GRANGER
DISTRICT VII

TODD R. COLLINS
DISTRICT VIII

MAINE PROSECUTORS ASSOCIATION SHIRA BURNS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

**“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

Public Hearing Date: March 3, 2025

Testimony in SUPPORT of LD 666

Senator Beebe-Center, Representative Hasenfus and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety. My name is Shira Burns and I represent the Maine Prosecutors Association and am here to testify in support of LD 666, which requests \$2.5 million in annual funding to sustain Maine’s Certified Domestic Violence Intervention Programs (CDVIP). As a prosecutor, I have witnessed firsthand the profound impact that these programs have in breaking the cycle of violence, holding offenders accountable, and ultimately saving lives.

The Certified Domestic Violence Intervention Programs in Maine provide evidence-based, community-driven solutions to one of the most pervasive and harmful issues facing our state—domestic abuse. These programs, which use a standardized, evidence-based curriculum, are recognized in Maine statute as the most effective and appropriate community-based interventions for addressing domestic violence. The outcomes are clear: offenders are given the tools to understand and change their behavior, and survivors are given a better chance at living in safety.

From the perspective of law enforcement and prosecution, these programs are critical. They play an essential role in our justice system by addressing the root causes of domestic violence and providing a pathway for offenders to change. This is not just about holding offenders accountable in court; it is about preventing future harm and promoting long-term behavioral change that leads to safer communities. When these critical intervention programs are not available or not adequately funded, prosecutors are faced with difficult choices that are out of line with best practices and statutory recommendations for domestic abuse cases. We are forced to make decisions that could compromise the safety of victims. Without access to these proven, evidence-based programs, prosecutors are left with fewer options to hold offenders accountable in a way that leads to meaningful change. We have seen this in York, Sagadahoc, and Lincoln counties in just the last two years. This is not just a flaw in our system—it undermines the very principles of justice and safety we are sworn to uphold.

For years, these critical services depended on participant fees alone, resulting in financial instability and program precarity. This necessary investment in the future of Maine’s domestic violence intervention efforts would support these programs to maintain the level of service that survivors and their communities deserve.

I've seen the challenges faced by our intervention programs, and I've seen what happens when they lack needed resources and close their doors. Without state funding, we risk losing this critical infrastructure—one that supports both the victims of domestic violence but also those who need to be held accountable for their actions.

These programs are central to our ability to prevent domestic violence, ensure the safety of survivors, and hold offenders accountable in a meaningful way. The \$2.5 million investment will provide the stability and resources these programs need to continue their work and to keep more families safe.

I strongly urge this committee to support LD 666 for the sake of our communities, our families, and our collective commitment to ending domestic violence in Maine. This is not just an investment in programs—it is an investment in the future of our state.