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Testimony of Charles Moody

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

Date of Public Hearing: March 3, 2025

Senator Beebe-Center, Representative Hasenfus, and members of the Committee, my name is Chuck Moody. I have been running the Certified Domestic Violence Intervention Program in Aroostook County for 20 years. We offer classes in Houlton, Caribou, Presque Isle, and Fort Kent.

Batterer Intervention Programs (DVIPs) emerged in the United States in the late 1970s as one component of the social response to intimate partner violence. These programs were focused on reforming abusers and unteaching men patriarchal values. Another aim was reducing periods of incarceration so that their families' experiences of further hardships such as financial stress and homelessness were minimized. The men could be released from incarceration, continue to support their families, and get the needed education around their violence under the supervision of probation.

The programs focus on discussions of respect, health, equality, and self-care to shift belief systems that lead to domestic violence. We talk every week about the impact of abuse and the damage caused. We talk about how change happens, and these are the steps to change that are discussed and what we look for as educators:

- Admitting fully to what he has done and accepting responsibility without excuses of blaming the victim or anyone else;
- Identifying patterns of abusive behavior, the attitudes that drive his abuse, and the impact of his abuse on his partner and children;
- Committing to a decades-long process of change and not declaring himself "cured;"

- Sustaining positive changed behavior that includes respectful and supportive actions, not just a lack of abusive ones.

As facilitators, we don't always know if this is happening from our 90 minutes a week with them. We can't know for sure if he's using his change as a bargaining chip with his partner to insist that it's her turn to put in some effort or if he's demanding credit for improvements he had to make as the result of his abuse or if he's denying the impact of his use of violence by saying, "I haven't done anything like this in a long time, why are you making such a big deal?" The partners and children are the ones who see the change firsthand.

They might see him carrying his weight at home and doing his fair share. He might handle conflicts calmly and respond to complaints from his partner more openly. His parenting might become more supportive and positive, and his attitudes about women generally might improve. This was made clear to me in one of the most impactful experiences I've had. One day in the Houlton Court Room I was waiting to testify in a hearing. A man that I recognized as a participant who completed the Certified Domestic Violence Intervention Program was standing in front of the judge being released from his deferred disposition. The judge was asking him questions and his wife stood up beside him and spoke up. Her statement to the judge was thanking the judge for ordering her husband to attend and complete the Domestic Violence Intervention Program because now she has her husband back and their children have their father back. Please support the investment in these programs so that there can be better chances of change like this happening for more Mainers.

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