



The Maine Coalition
to End Domestic Violence

P.O. Box 5188
Augusta, ME 04332
207.430.8334

Testimony of Karen Wyman
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 honorable members of the Committee, I am Karen Wyman, Director of Prevention and Intervention at the Maine Coalition to End Domestic Violence, testifying in support of LD 666: An Act to Prevent Domestic Violence by Providing Adequate Funding Support for Court-Ordered Certified Domestic Violence Intervention Programs.

The Maine Coalition to End Domestic Violence (MCEDV) was founded in 1977 to unite voices across Maine in the fight to end domestic abuse and violence. Our statewide network of ten victim advocacy organizations provides vital training, technical support, and advocacy to ensure survivors are safe and supported. In addition to our victim advocacy work, MCEDV provides statewide training, monitoring, and administrative support to Maine's Certified Domestic Violence Intervention Programs (CDVIPs).

Today, I urge you to make a critical investment in Certified Domestic Violence Intervention Programs (CDVIPs). These programs are vital to ending abuse and ensuring survivor safety. However, due to funding shortages, CDVIPs are at risk of closing their doors. In the past 18 months alone, programs in York, Sagadahoc, and Lincoln counties have shut down, leaving too many Maine communities without essential services. To keep these programs running statewide, we urgently need \$2.5 million annually.

Why CDVIPs Matter

Safety and Homicide Prevention

Domestic abuse contributes to nearly half of all homicides in Maine. CDVIPs address key risk factors, such as stalking, strangulation, and serial battering, which indicate a higher risk of lethal violence. As one survivor shared, "Keep doing these classes because there are a lot of ladies who wouldn't be here otherwise." Your investment will help save lives and prevent tragedy.

Research, including MCEDV's 2020 and 2024 CDVIP Survivor Impact Surveys, shows that survivors feel safer when participants complete CDVIP. In fact, 52% of survivors reported increased safety after their abuser attended the program. By holding abusers accountable

and offering a pathway to change, CDVIPs help prevent future violence and protect victims, including children, from further harm.

Proven Positive Impact

Maine's network of intervention programs has a track record of effective community collaboration, quality programming, and reduced recidivism.

Maine requires that CDVIPs engage in local Coordinated Community Response efforts with key system partners, ensuring that they are in communication with law enforcement, judges, prosecutors, probation officers, victim advocates, and others who are in contact with victims and the people who have hurt them. With these valuable partners, they strive to make sure that it is clear across the board and throughout the community that abuse is unacceptable, that safety of survivors, children, and the public is paramount, and that change is possible and expected. They work with community partners to connect participants with additional services as needed, like substance use and mental health treatment or employment and educational services.

All of Maine's CDVIPs are trained in the same approach and curriculum, which creates greater consistency and clarity across jurisdictions and allows effective problem-solving when there is excess demand in one area and class openings in another. MCEDV, the MDOC, DVRCs, and the CDVIPs work together to ensure that those referred to CDVIPs get into a program as quickly as possible and can rest assured that they will get comparable quality programming wherever they go in the state. This network also works together to review the certification standards to ensure that Maine continues to lead the nation with guidelines that align – and sometimes shape – national best practices.

MCEDV's 2024 survey showed that 77% of individuals who completed the 48-week program had not been re-arrested for domestic violence. Non-completion is a clear sign that positive change hasn't been made, leaving survivors vulnerable, and CDVIPs ensure that survivors and the referral source – probation, child protective services, or DV court, most often - are notified when that happens to ensure safety for the survivor and their children and swift and certain consequences for the non-compliant participant. Compliance and non-compliance with requirements to attend CDVIP give survivors critical information on whether their partners are genuinely changing and equip them to plan for their safety effectively.

Community-Based Accountability

CDVIPs provide 48 weeks of structured intervention to address the root causes of domestic abuse—misguided beliefs that violence is acceptable. Unlike anger management programs, CDVIPs challenge participants to confront their harmful behaviors and beliefs. These programs hold abusers accountable and work to change both their attitudes and behaviors, making it clear that abuse is never acceptable in Maine.

These programs are not “shame and blame” sessions or support groups for abusers. They offer pathways to real change, providing individuals who have harmed others the



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opportunity to take responsibility for their actions and examine their behavior. This is a program rooted in hope for transformation, not just punishment.

Smart and Cost-Effective Statewide Investment

CDVIPs are a vital part of Maine's coordinated community response to domestic abuse, required by statute in cases of domestic violence. Ensuring their sustainability is a smart investment in the future of our communities. The \$2.5 million investment in CDVIPs is a fiscally sound decision. It's a fraction of the cost of incarceration and will save taxpayer dollars by reducing future violence, hospitalizations, legal costs, and incarceration. This investment will pay dividends in public safety and long-term fiscal responsibility.

The Bottom Line: Maine Needs These Programs

Maine law already recognizes CDVIPs as "the most appropriate and effective community-based intervention in cases of domestic abuse" (17-A MRS 1501(9)) and requires Maine courts to order most people convicted of domestic violence to complete these programs (17-A MRS 1807(4)). Without adequate funding, these programs are at risk, putting survivors, children, and communities in danger.

I urge you to prioritize this bill and the \$2.5 million needed annually for these life-saving programs. This investment will protect survivors, prevent future violence, and strengthen our communities.

This is about public safety, fiscal responsibility, and human dignity. By allocating this funding, you are making a clear commitment to a safer Maine. The cost is small, much smaller than the cost of continued abuse and violence, and the impact is profound. Thank you for your time and dedication.

Karen Wyman
Maine Coalition to End Domestic Violence
P.O. Box 5188
Augusta, ME 04347
Karen@mcedv.org
(207-430-4023)