



The Maine Coalition  
to End Domestic Violence

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**Testimony of Andrea Mancuso, on behalf of the Maine Coalition to End Domestic Violence  
In SUPPORT of LD 665: “AAR the Use of Military Protection Orders in Protection from  
Abuse and Protection from Harassment Proceedings”**

**Before the Joint Standing Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs  
Monday, March 3, 2025**

Senator Hickman, Representative Supica, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs, I am writing on behalf of the Maine Coalition to End Domestic Violence (MCEDV)<sup>1</sup> in support of LD 665.

Military protection orders (MPO) can often be an important safety tool for victims of domestic abuse and violence who are connected with our armed forces, either as service members or as spouses or partners. However, MPOs are more limited in scope than Maine’s civil protection orders and their efficacy beyond military installments is also limited. It will often be the case that a victim will need to access Maine’s District Courts to obtain a civil protection from abuse (PFA) order in order to more comprehensively address their vulnerabilities and safety needs.

The modifications outlined in LD 665 will help make obtaining a temporary protection order easier by allowing the court, upon receiving a complaint for protection from abuse, to find that the existence of a military protection order is sufficient to establish that the plaintiff or a minor child is in immediate and present danger, which is the finding that needs to be made for an immediate, ex parte, temporary protection order to issue. The purpose of Maine’s protection from abuse statute importantly includes allowing victims of domestic abuse and violence to obtain expeditious and effective protection against further abuse. LD 665 is in keeping with that purpose.

MCEDV recommends that Section 7 from the proposed bill be removed. The existing use of the word “civil” in this heading is intentional and important for identifying which rules of the court apply in these cases – particularly important given the nexus these cases often are happening in tandem with criminal investigations and prosecutions. Additionally, the

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<sup>1</sup> MCEDV serves a membership of eight regional domestic violence resource centers as well two programs providing culturally specific services. Last year, our member programs provided services to more than 12,000 victims of domestic violence in Maine, including court advocacy services for survivors in the civil and criminal courts across Maine.

court would not be able to take judicial notice of the facts that led to the issuance of the MPO, only the existence of the MPO. At a hearing on the PFA complaint, a judge would still need to hear the facts in order to make a decision about issuing a final order. Judges already have a lot of latitude regarding what they can take judicial notice of, and this language is therefore unnecessary and has potential to cause confusion.

Excepting Section 7, the remainder of the bill represents relatively minor modifications to the protection from abuse statute which, together, accomplish an important policy goal: ensuring that the existence of the MPO can be a sufficient signal to the Maine District Court that there is enough of a risk to the plaintiff or their minor child to support the issuance of an ex parte order. It will make the initiation of the process just that much more trauma informed for this subset of survivors.

Thank you for the opportunity to share our perspective.

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