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**Testimony of Michelle Lenihan, Deputy Commissioner, Department of Defense,
Veterans, and Emergency Management
BEFORE THE JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON VETERANS AND LEGAL
AFFAIRS
March 5, 2025**

**LD 665, “An Act Regarding the Use of Military Protective Orders in Protection from
Abuse and Protection from Harassment Proceedings”**

Senator Hickman, Representative Supica, and honorable members of the Veterans and Legal Affairs Committee. I am Michelle Lenihan, Deputy Commissioner for the Department of Defense, Veterans and Emergency Management (DVEM).

I am here to testify in support of LD 665, “An Act Regarding the Use of Military Protective Orders in Protection from Abuse and Protection from Harassment Proceedings.” The legislation should provide greater support to survivors by permitting civilian courts access to MPOs that might bolster and expedite processes for obtaining temporary protection orders.

Military Protection Orders (MPOs) are a tool that active-duty military commanders can utilize to protect survivors of suspected violence and abuse at the hands of service members under their command (in Title 10 U.S.C. status). MPOs act similarly to the protection from harassment and protection from abuse orders that can be issued in Maine courts to restrict the actions and movements of suspected abusers. However, MPOs exist as a function of a commander’s authority over the service members under their command and are only enforceable under the Uniform Code of Military Justice by active-duty authority and cannot be enforced by civilian courts. This bill would allow a person, whether they are a service member, dependent of a service member, or other person who has the protection of an MPO to file that order in the Maine District Court, allowing it to be considered as evidence when deciding whether to issue a temporary protection order under Maine law.

For instance, if a Maine National Guard (MENG) service member obtained an MPO while in federal service (under Title 10 U.S.C.) status, and they continued to require protections once they returned to state status (Title 32 U.S.C.), this legislation may support their request for a civil protection order enforceable by civil authorities in Maine.

Thank you for your time, consideration and support. I welcome any questions you may have.