

Testimony of Barbara Theriault

In support of LD 875, An Act to Fund Essential Services for Victims of Domestic Violence.
Before the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services
March 19, 2025

My name is Barbara Theriault. My daughter Amy Theriault was violently murdered by her ex-boyfriend in a domestic violence tragedy on May 31, 2014. It was the worst day of my life and a memory that never diminishes. It was during this time that I was introduced to the Hope and Justice Project. The Hope and Justice Project coordinated a vigil for Amy. It provided the family and the community a safe place to honor Amy's life, offer support to her grieving family and community members, and bring awareness to the community that domestic violence does occur in our communities and in our families. The people at the Hope and Justice Project are always ready to listen, to offer words of comfort, and help the family begin the difficult process of healing.

There was a two year waiting period before the trial was held. Staff at the Hope and Justice Project were always available to help answer questions and just to talk. There was always a member of the staff at all the court hearings to offer support as needed. The trial was exceedingly emotional. To have someone care and offer words of encouragement provided us with strength to face the enormity of the trial.

I wanted to do something for victims of domestic abuse and violence in memory of Amy. The Hope and Justice Project helped me to go to the legislature to request a change in law. This resulted in "Amy's Law". Without the support of the Hope and Justice Project, this law would never have come to fruition.

Since Amy's death, I have worked with the Hope and Justice Project on a few memorial walks in Amy's memory. The public still remembers Amy. This helped promote awareness of domestic abuse and violence in our community and provided an opportunity for people to obtain information on this vital service.

This letter is being written to request that funding for the Hope and Justice Project continue without lapse. What will victims do without this service? Who will they call for support to be safe from abuse and violence? Where will they go if there are no shelters? People will find themselves trapped in a repeating cycle of abuse with no place to go for help. The Hope and Justice Project provides a crucial refuge for people to regain their independence, rebuild their lives, and be free of violence. If the Hope and Justice Project is not funded, it will result in an increase of abuse and violence in our community.

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara Theriault