

## Testimony In Support of LD 875

Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer, and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services, my name is Emily Jayne. I am a resident of Kennebec County. I'm here testifying in support of LD 875, an act to fund essential services for victims of domestic violence.

I'm vulnerably placing my trauma on display for all of you to see. Please listen to my pain, while holding empathy and understanding. I escaped his abuse only 6 months ago. I endured psychological torment every moment of the day. I did not walk on eggshells, I walked on shards of glass bleeding in silence, so as not to disturb him. I swallowed my cries, while he used his tongue as a weapon to pierce my aching heart.

I was a doormat covered in the mud of his resentment.

My words twisted into knots that couldn't be undone.

White noise rang in my ears, as I begged for him to hear me.

My thick skin, was paper in his presence.

Threats of suicide rattled my bones daily. If I left, he would kill himself, and it would be my fault.

Our apartment filled with the sounds of slammed doors, and holes in the wall.

His hands, once gentle, forged into a weapon.

Sex, which once opened the doors to our souls, became a battleground for his violence. He wrapped his hands around my throat until the darkness ensued. The lack of consciousness did not stop him, in fact it excited him.

3 is the number of times I was backed into a corner with a knife pressed to my throat. He craved the fear that lived inside my eyes. I hid in bathrooms. I crouched down, as objects flew towards me. I made up code words to signal to my family, that I needed help.

I tried to leave SO many times. He blocked exits. He wouldn't let me call the police.

The person that I used to be waited in a cage longing for freedom.

I knew no way out. On a cold November night in 2023, I poured a bottle of pills into my mouth, filled with peace, knowing I would be free soon. He threw me across the room in anger, screamed in my face, how could I do this to him. I was left alone in the hospital for two days.

The consequences of my actions.

He dimmed my light, and then asked me why I wasn't shining.

Almost a year after I attempted to leave this world, I made a call to Family Violence Project's hotline. They gave me support, but most of all they gave me hope. The resources they provided I will be forever grateful for. They connected me with the Sexual Assault Crisis Center, with Pine Tree Legal, so that I had a free attorney for the two restraining orders I filed, they connected me with law enforcement, and they involved me in a support group.

I am still rebuilding my life piece by piece. I lost everything I had ever worked for. But I wouldn't be standing here before you, without the Domestic Violence Advocacy Programs

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provided to me in the State of Maine. The demand for these services has gone up, but funding has not.

There is joyful life on the other side of abuse. Please help people like me escape the cage of domestic violence. Please pass LD 875.

Thank you for your time.