

Testimony of Michael Pike
In Support of LD 875 An Act to Fund Essential Services for Victims of Domestic Violence
March 18, 2025

Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer, and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services, my name is Michael Pike to share why support for this critical funding is so important.

First off, I am honored to share my testimony with this committee, and relish the opportunity to speak out about the importance of the work being done to support survivors of domestic violence. Please allow me to share my experience as it relates to the Family Violence Project. I served as the Domestic Violence Investigator with the Kennebec and Somerset District Attorney's Office for seven years. During this time, I witnessed firsthand the importance of organizations like the Family Violence Project that provide critical resources, support, and safety for survivors of domestic violence.

I witnessed the isolation and feelings of helplessness for those trapped in abusive relationships. The emotional and physical abuse leaves deep scars—both visible and invisible. Survivors come to believe the lies they are told, that they're not strong enough to leave, they are undeserving of help, or that they wouldn't survive without their abuser. For many, it takes years to recognize the signs of abuse and to finally build up the courage to seek help.

Working in tandem with an advocate from the Family Violence Project, I was able to attain better outcomes for cases of domestic abuse as they made their way through the court system. The support and resources they provided were invaluable in this endeavor, empowering survivors to "find their voice", and stand up to their abuser.

Many of the survivors that I worked with told me that connecting with an advocate from the Family Violence Project opened up a world they didn't know existed—a world of support, understanding, and compassion. Through their services, survivors of domestic violence are able to rebuild their lives, regain their confidence, and take back their sense of safety. The staff at the Family Violence Project listen without judgment, make survivors feel seen and heard, and perhaps most importantly, help them understand they are not alone.

For many of the survivors that I served, the resources provided by the Family Violence Project were life-changing. They were given the tools to navigate the legal system, safety planning for them and their children, and the emotional support needed to help them heal. Domestic violence isn't just physical—it affects every aspect of your life, from your mental health to your relationships and your sense of self-worth. And organizations like the Family Violence Project provide not only the immediate safety and services survivors need, but also the long-term resources for healing, empowerment, and justice.

I am excited to have the opportunity to speak about the Family Violence Project. It's not just the work they do—it's the way they do it, with kindness, respect, and unwavering dedication to those who need it most. Let this serve as a reminder to others who are still suffering in silence

that there is hope. You are worthy of love, respect, and safety. Reach out. Help is available. The Family Violence Project is here for you, and there is a way out.

Thank you.

Sincerely,
Michael Pike