

## 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 Dr. Kerry Roarke, I live in Biddeford, and I am testifying in support of LD 875, An Act to Fund Essential Services for Victims of Domestic Violence.

You look at me and see a successful healthcare professional, a doctor, a mother, a daughter, a friend. You don't see the woman who cowered in the corner while her husband screamed at her. The woman who fled to the police station with her children strapped in the back seat. The woman who found her personal possessions smashed and defiled. The woman who almost jumped in front of a city snow plow because she thought there was no way out. And if a well-educated woman like myself with resources and connections could be brought to this point, where death was the only escape, how can we expect anyone else to make it out?

Many others are left without any resources, isolated from their family and friends, and without any hope at all. Legal protections and interventions are hard to come by. Domestic violence services are all we have when we are on the run. And with federal funding slashed, Mainers once again must rely on each other to get the job done, to prioritize families. We are here asking for the Legislature to make a statement - that ending domestic violence and abuse should be everyone's priority - because all Maine families deserve to have a safe and loving home. There may be uncertainty in Washington, but let us show there is certainty in Maine.

I share my story because I want women to know two things - there is hope and there is community on the other side. There is a bridge to a second chance, and domestic violence services like Caring Unlimited are there to help you reach it. We must continue funding these essential services, and we need to do more. If you've read the local headlines lately, you know we need to do more. We must keep the door open for them until they are ready to walk through it. Thank you.