



Rachel Talbot Ross  
Senator, District 28

THE MAINE SENATE  
132nd Legislature

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*Testimony of Senator Rachel Talbot Ross introducing*  
**LD 1487, “An Act to Support Community Violence Prevention and Intervention Programs”**

*Before the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services*  
April 14, 2025

Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer, and esteemed members of the Health and Human Services Committee, I am Senator Rachel Talbot Ross. I represent Senate District 28, which includes part of my hometown of Portland and Peaks Island.

Thank you for the opportunity to present LD 1487, “An Act to Support Community Violence Prevention and Intervention Programs.”

This bill is a simple but essential step forward for the Office of Violence Prevention within the Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention. Specifically, LD 1487 authorizes the Office to seek and accept funding from any source — federal, state, county, municipal, or private — to support its work.

This authority is common sense and consistent with how we fund many of Maine’s public health efforts. By enabling programs to access grants and external funding opportunities, we not only leverage federal and private dollars to support our communities but also help reduce the tax burden on Maine residents.

This bill also builds on this Committee's work during the Second Session of the 131st Legislature.

LD 2237, “An Act to Strengthen Public Safety, Health and Well-being by Expanding Services and Coordinating Violence Prevention Resources,” was a comprehensive response to Maine's growing need for system-level violence prevention efforts. That bill proposed various reforms — including expanding mobile crisis response services, establishing new crisis receiving centers, and creating the Office of Violence Prevention within the Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention.

While much of LD 2237’s language — including the section establishing the Office — was ultimately carried into the state budget, this Committee made clear in its deliberations that this Office would be an essential tool for coordinating violence prevention efforts statewide.

However, in its final version, LD 2237 did not include authority for the Office to receive or apply for outside funding. LD 1487 would add that necessary authority, ensuring that the Office of Violence Prevention can pursue federal, private, and philanthropic funds to support its mission.

This is a natural next step in the development of the Office and an opportunity to bring in additional resources to support Maine’s communities.

The Office of Violence Prevention is still relatively new, established during the 131st Legislature. It was created to coordinate and promote effective violence prevention efforts statewide — including public education campaigns, research, and community-based intervention strategies — with a focus on reducing gun violence and related trauma.

Many of us were involved in creating this Office, and while its foundational work is now underway, it will need sustainable funding streams to achieve its full potential. Allowing the Office to pursue outside funding will ensure it has access to resources necessary to support Maine communities — especially those most impacted by violence.

Importantly, this authority also aligns with the Office's existing work. The Office is charged with identifying and promoting evidence-based strategies for violence prevention. Many of those strategies — from community violence intervention programs to trauma-informed outreach — are supported by national grant programs and philanthropic partners eager to invest in local solutions.

LD 1487 ensures that Maine will not leave those dollars on the table.

This straightforward and responsible bill strengthens an Office in which this Committee has already invested. It gives the Office of Violence Prevention the tools it needs to support local communities, expand its programming, and sustain its work over the long term.

I respectfully urge the Committee to support LD 1487.

Thank you for your time and for your commitment to public health and safety in Maine. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

**Rachel Talbot Ross**

State Senator, District 28

*Representing part of Portland and Peaks Island*