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MAINE PROSECUTORS ASSOCIATION MAEGHAN MALONEY, DISTRICT ATTORNEY PROSECUTORIAL DISTRICT IV

**"An Act to Remove the Term "Alleged" When Referring to Victims of Sexual Assault in the
Maine Revised Statutes"**

**Before the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary
Public Hearing Date: April 25, 2025
Testimony in Support of LD 1651**

Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary. My name is Maeghan Maloney, I am the District Attorney for Prosecutorial District IV which consists of Kennebec and Somerset Counties. I am here testifying on behalf of the Maine Prosecutors Association in support of LD 1651. Thank you to Representative Pugh for his leadership on this bill.

This bill is very limited in scope and exclusively removes the word "alleged" in front of the word "victim" in statutes that discuss sexual assault forensic examinations. The word "alleged" still appears in front of the word "crime". As this committee has learned in this session, sexual assault forensic examinations are a comprehensive medical examination of a victim of sexual assault or strangulation. What we have learned from our medical community partners is that they do not use the word "alleged" in reference to their patients.

Taking out the word "alleged" before "victim" in regard to the statutes that deal with sexual assault forensic examination puts the statutes more in line with how we refer to victims of crimes, even before their abusers have been convicted. Title 17-A, chapter 75 is our statutes that deal with victims' rights. Nowhere in this chapter do you find the term "alleged victim." All of the language in that chapter refers to "victims" in both the pre and post disposition of a criminal case. Our statutes should not single out referring to people who are receiving medical treatment through the form of a sexual assault forensic examinations as "alleged victims" when that is inconsistent with language used by medical providers and inconsistent with other statutes.

The language in this bill has been run by the director of Victim Compensation who pays medical providers for sexual assault forensic examinations and they do not anticipate any collateral consequences with this language change.

Language is powerful especially when dealing with the most vulnerable. This bill does not change any process or affect anyone's rights, it simply takes away a word that society uses the most with victims of sexual assault. A societal norm that is slowly being changed.

For all these reasons, the Maine Prosecutors Association in support of LD 1651.