

mecasa

MAINE COALITION AGAINST SEXUAL ASSAULT

May 1, 2025

Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary:

My name is Melissa Martin, and I am offering testimony today on behalf of the Maine Coalition Against Sexual Assault (MECASA), the organization which represents and serves Maine's sexual violence prevention and response programs as well as Maine's Children's Advocacy Centers. MECASA initiates and advocates for victim-centered public policy; provides expert training, technical assistance, and resources for providers and partners; and funds the service providers in your communities.

MECASA is here today neither for nor against LD 1780, "An Act to Secure Under Authority of a Subpoena Pretrial Statements from a Witness Other than the Defendant in a Criminal Proceeding" as amended.

The bill as amended exempts child sexual assault and adult sexual assault cases. Based on this, we are neither for nor against this bill. These exemptions are vital for a few reasons.

First, in child and adult sexual assault cases, there are almost always extensive statements already provided to defense counsel, such as a full recording of the forensic examination, a full victim statement in a police report, and a full victim statement as part of the sexual assault forensic examination. As a result, the harm that this bill seeks to remedy—of defense counsel not having enough information—is simply rarely an issue in these cases.

Second, as this Committee has heard, requiring sexual assault survivors to retell their stories can be retraumatizing and is not the best practice in gathering the most accurate evidence.

Finally, the process laid out in this bill would not sufficiently protect survivors of sexual assault, as often unrepresented survivors would be asked to respond to subpoenas and engage in a questioning from defense counsel likely without an attorney or prosecutor or judge present to protect their rights and minimize the inherent intimidation built into the process. Allowing this process would have an incredibly chilling effect on sexual assault survivors choosing to make original reports and then choosing to continue in the criminal justice process.

For these reasons, we are neither for nor against the bill as amended. Thank you for your careful consideration. We would be pleased to answer any questions you might have.

About Maine's Sexual Assault Service Providers

One in five Mainers will experience sexual assault at some point in their lifetime.¹ Each year, 19,000 Mainers will experience sexual violence.²

Maine's sexual violence service providers provide free and confidential services across the state to victims/survivors of sexual harassment and sexual assault and those close to them, as well as to individuals who wish to increase their understanding of the issues. Just some of the services include a 24-hour statewide sexual assault helpline, crisis intervention and information, support groups, in-person accompaniment and advocacy through the medical and legal systems, and school- and community-based prevention education. Services are provided for a victim/survivor regardless of when they experienced sexual violence, and regardless of what type of sexual violence they experienced. Types of sexual violence include, but are not limited to, sexual harassment and gender-based bullying, child sexual abuse, elder sexual abuse, stalking, sex trafficking, and sexual violence within an intimate partner relationship.

24/7 Confidential

Maine Sexual Assault Helpline: 1-800-871-7741

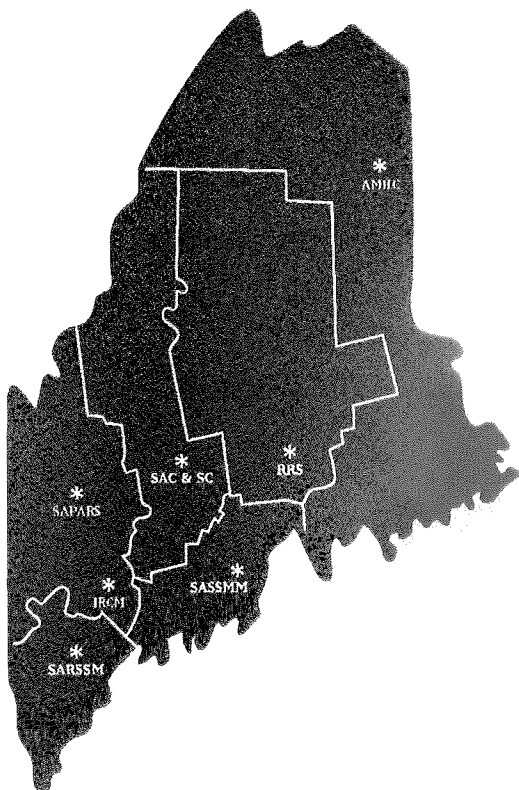
¹ Murray, C., Dumont, R & Shaler, G. (2022). *Maine Crime Victimization Report: Informing public policy for safer communities*. Maine Statistical Analysis Center. University of Southern Maine.

² *Ibid.*

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MAINE COALITION AGAINST SEXUAL ASSAULT

info@mecasa.org | mecasa.org
207-626-0034



**STATEWIDE
SEXUAL ASSAULT HELPLINE
1-800-871-7741**

Free. Private. 24/7.

MAINE'S SEXUAL ASSAULT SUPPORT CENTERS

AMHC Sexual Assault Services (AMHC)

Serving Aroostook, Hancock, & Washington Counties •
amhsas.org

Immigrant Resource Center of Maine

Serving Androscoggin & Cumberland Counties • ircofmaine.org

Rape Response Services (RRS)

Serving Penobscot & Piscataquis Counties • rrsonline.org

Sexual Assault Prevention & Response Services (SAPARS)

Serving Androscoggin, Oxford & Franklin Counties and the towns of
Bridgton & Harrison • sapars.org

Sexual Assault Crisis & Support Center (SAC & SC)

Serving Kennebec & Somerset Counties • silentnomore.org

Sexual Assault Response Services of Southern Maine (SARSSM)

Serving Cumberland & York Counties • sarssm.org

Sexual Assault Support Services of Midcoast Maine (SASSMM)

Serving Eastern Cumberland, Sagadahoc, Knox, Waldo & Lincoln
Counties • sassmm.org

MORE SEXUAL VIOLENCE SERVICES

Maine TransNet • mainetrans.net • info@mainetransnet.org

Wabanaki Women's Coalition • wabanakiwomenscoalition.org
207-763-3478

Aroostook Band of Micmacs, Domestic & Sexual Violence
Advocacy Center • 207-551-3639

Houlton Band of Maliseets, Domestic & Sexual Violence
Advocacy Center • 207-532-6401

Indian Township Passamaquoddy, Domestic & Sexual
Violence Advocacy Center • 207-214-1917

Passamaquoddy Peaceful Relations • 1-877-853-2613

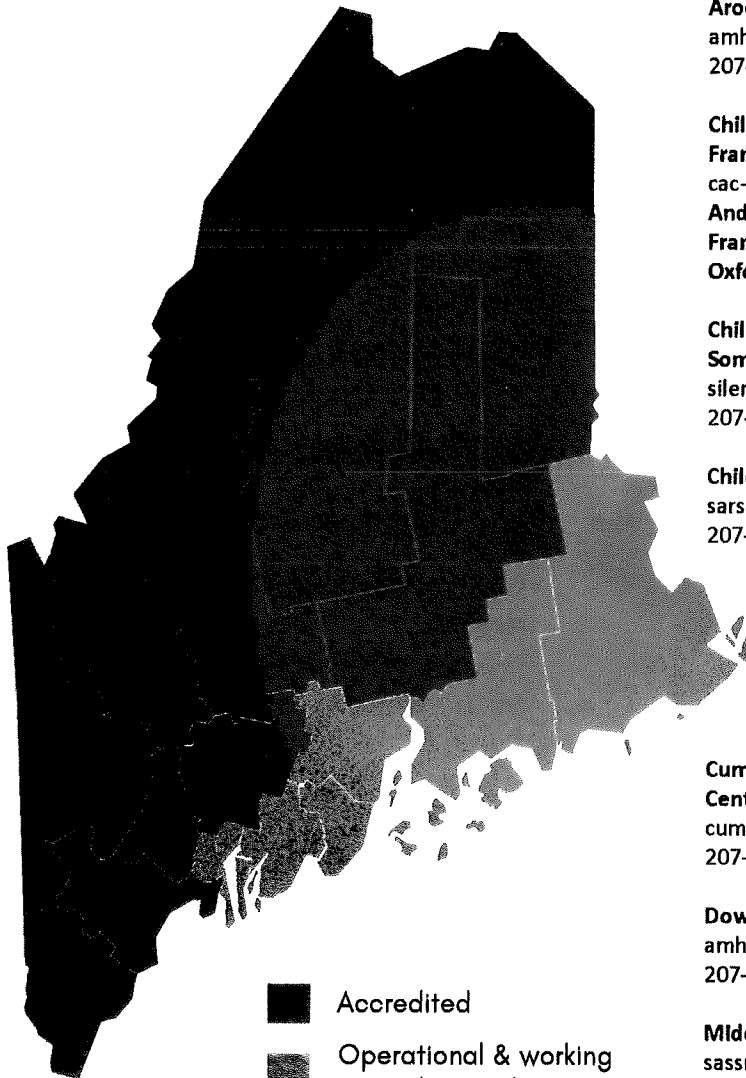
Penobscot Indian Nation, Domestic & Sexual Violence
Advocacy Center • 207-631-4886



MAINE NETWORK OF

CHILDREN'S ADVOCACY CENTERS

Maine's Children's Advocacy Centers



Accredited



Operational & working
toward accreditation

Aroostook County Children's Advocacy Center
amhcsas.org
207-472-6134

**Children's Advocacy Center of Androscoggin,
Franklin, and Oxford Counties**
cac-afco.org
Androscoggin: 207-784-0436
Franklin: 207-778-9777
Oxford: 207-739-1228

**Children's Advocacy Center of Kennebec &
Somerset Counties**
silentnomore.org/about-our-cac
207-861-4491

Children's Advocacy Center of York County
sarsmm.org
207-459-2380

**Cumberland County Children's Advocacy
Center**
cumberlandcountycac.org
207-879-6160

Downeast Children's Advocacy Center
amhcsas.org
207-255-3687

Midcoast Children's Advocacy Center
sassmm.org
207-522-7162

Penquis Children's Advocacy Center
penquiscac.org
207-974-2469