

May 12, 2025

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

My name is Melissa Martin, and I am submitting 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 in support of LD 1816, An Act to Establish a Statewide Sexual Assault Forensic Examination Kit Tracking System and Conduct an Inventory of Existing Forensic Examination Kits in the Possession of Law Enforcement. Thank you to Senator Duson for sponsoring this legislation.

As this Committee knows, Maine is behind many other states in our development of statewide systems related to the tracking and testing of sexual assault forensic examinations. In response to this, MECASA worked with the Department of Public Safety in 2023 to apply for and receive a STOP grant to create a pilot project to create an inventory of existing sexual assault forensic examinations that are being stored in the state and create a tracking system for future sexual assault forensic examinations collected in the state. The result of that grant is that Maine has adapted a tracking system originally built in Idaho for use in Maine and that system has been up and running in the two pilot districts since last fall. An inventory of kits in the two pilot districts is also underway.

As a result of knowing that this project was an important first step towards broader kit reform, including statewide tracking and increased testing policy and infrastructure, MECASA supported a bill that would fund a statewide tracking system and inventory last year, LD 2129. This bill is effectively identical to LD 2129, a bill that passed and recommended for funding for the Appropriations Committee in the 131<sup>st</sup> Legislature. Ultimately, this bill did not become law so we support this current attempt to bring the legislation again.

This bill is also similar, although not identical, to another bill heard earlier this session by this committee, LD 549. I want to briefly identify the two ways this bill is different and highlight why we are supporting this bill when we only supported portions of LD 549.

This bill includes provisions for a statewide inventory and tracking system, but it does not mandate sexual assault kit testing—yet. We support this approach, especially in the current budgetary climate, because the smaller cost of this bill will make it more likely to be funded, allowing for the important pilot work to continue. If nothing is funded, we will miss the opportunity to capitalize on the momentum created by the pilot project—and the worst case scenario is that the work we have started will need to stop. Grant funding to continue system oversight is not a guarantee. In addition, as we stated in our testimony on LD 549, mandated testing, especially of kits collected in the past, requires careful planning to ensure trauma informed survivor notification and investigations, something the bill did not include.

Second, LD 549 included an amendment that exempts prosecutors from participating in the tracking system. We believe it is important to have prosecutors involved.

For these reasons, we support the bill. Thank you for your consideration. We hope you will support LD 1816 and 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.<sup>1</sup> Each year, 14,000 Mainers will experience sexual violence.<sup>2</sup>

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.

---

<sup>1</sup> Dumont, R. & Shaler, G. (2015). *Maine Crime Victimization Report: Informing public policy for safer communities*. Muskie School of Public Service, University of Southern Maine.

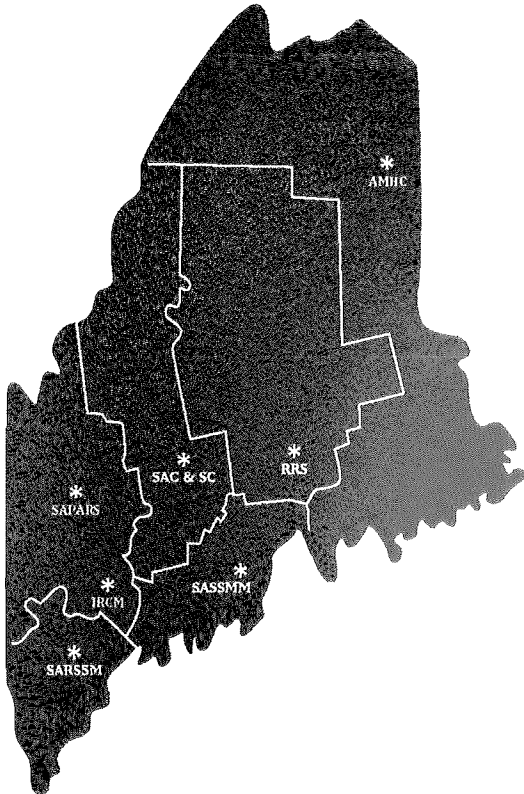
<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

*24/7 Confidential*  
*Maine Sexual Assault Helpline: 1-800-871-7741*

# **mecasa**

**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 •  
amhcsexualassaultservices.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 • sarsonline.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

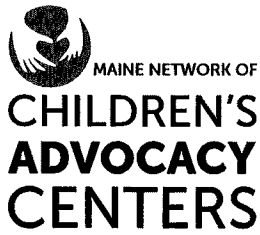
Aroostook Band of Micmacs, Domestic & Sexual Violence  
Advocacy Center • 207-551-3639

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

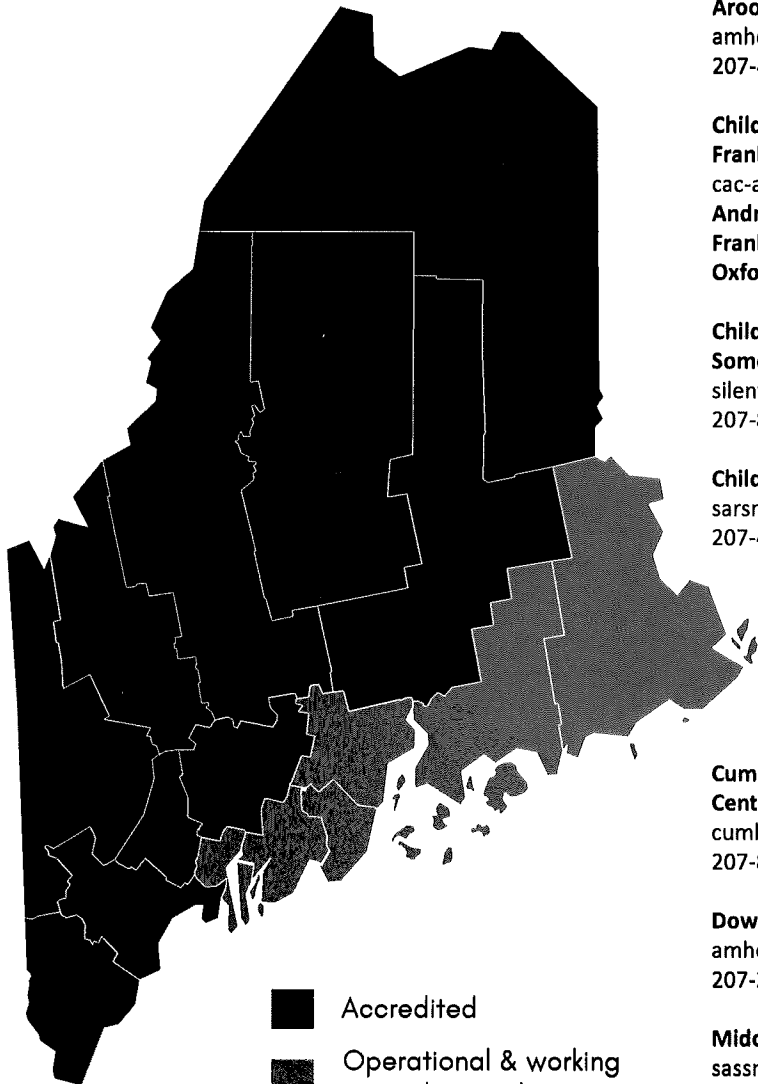
Indian Township Passamaquoddy, Domestic & Sexual  
Violence Advocacy Center • 207-214-1917

Passamaquoddy Peaceful Relations • 1-877-853-2613

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



# Maine'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