

STATE OF MAINE

Neil E. McLean, Jr.
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“An Act Making Supplemental Appropriations and Allocation from the General Fund and Other Funds for the Expenditures of the State Government and Changing Certain Provisions of the Law Necessary to the Proper Operations of State Government for the Fiscal Years Ending June 30, 2026 and June 30, 2027”

Before the Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs and the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary

Public Hearing Date: February 27, 2026

Testimony Neither For Nor Against LD 2212

Senator Rotundo, Representative Gattine, Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs, and the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary. My name is Neil E. McLean Jr.; I am the District Attorney for District 3, representing Androscoggin, Franklin, and Oxford Counties, and I am here to testify neither for, nor against LD 2212.

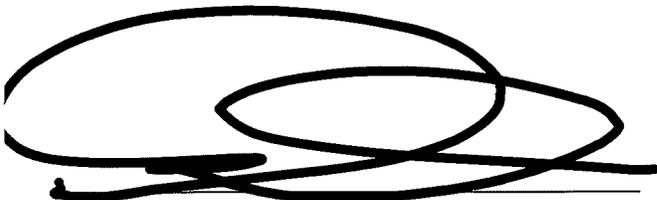
In our District 3, Oxford County Office, our local Domestic Violence Resource Center has provided us an Office on Violence Against Women (OVW) Rural Grant since 2013. The grant contract is good for 3-year increments. For the past 12 years, this grant has been fully funded to cover the salary and benefits of one prosecutor who dedicates their time and efforts almost exclusively to crimes of violence against domestic partners and children. This grant, which was in place more than six years before I came to District 3, was secured by our Safe Voices partners who are members of the Maine Coalition to End Domestic Violence (MCEDV) and the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence (NCADV). The partnership that followed has been strong, and it continues to be strong. Our collaboration in the fight against domestic violence and crimes of violence against children is proven and has served our community well. The best way to continue that success is by having a prosecutor who is specially trained and dedicated to these types of crimes.

The last cycle of the OVW Rural Grant concluded September 30, 2025. During grant cycles, my office makes bi-annual reports on the work we have accomplished. Over the last 15 months of the grant, the number of cases received and resolved by the assigned grant prosecutor were significant. I will focus on the aggregate number of domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, and child abuse cases processed. From July 2024 through December 2024, the Oxford Office received 221 cases processed by the grant prosecutor. In that same timeframe, 74 cases were resolved through either negotiations or trial. From January through June 2025, the office received 209 cases processed, with 72 cases resolved. From the last timeframe, July to September 2025, which only accounts for 3 months due to the grant expiring, the office received 68 cases processed, and 35 cases resolved. In total, over the last 15 months of the grant, the grant prosecutor was responsible for processing 498 of the more serious, challenging, and complex cases addressed by the criminal justice system. She was simultaneously responsible for the disposition of 181 of those types of cases. This is in addition to all her other courtroom responsibilities and obligations.

We currently have two general fund prosecutor positions in Oxford County. The OVW Rural Grant position afforded us a third prosecutor to specialize in the domestic violence/sexual assault/child victim cases. Based on the UCD pending case numbers provided by the judiciary, as of February 20, 2026, Oxford County alone had 1120 cases pending. This number does not include all filings or cases under review, cases with active warrants, etc. Based on that number, with only two prosecutors available, that would leave each responsible for 560 cases (again, that does not include the cases that are not in a pending status, so the number is actually larger). Additionally, under that significant caseload burden, neither prosecutor would be able to specialize in the domestic violence/sexual assault/child victim cases, which is so essential to understanding the legal nuance and complexity of these cases. The attention, training, and resources needed to most effectively prosecute these cases, and the expertise and time required to properly support survivor needs and achieve justice on their behalf is only accomplished by having a prosecutor solely dedicated to the domestic violence/sexual assault/child victim caseload. The OVW Rural Grant position allowed us to do this for more than 12 years, and the communities we represent, survivors, public safety, and justice all benefitted.

The OVW Rural Grant is not a new position to Oxford County. It is not a recent grant acquisition that we have voluntarily decided to abandon in preference of State funding. Rather, it is a position that we acquired in 2013. It is a position that we have relied on regularly over the last decade plus with great success in the prosecution of domestic violence, sexual assault, and violent crimes against children, as well as in the pursuit of justice for survivors of these horrific crimes. This specialized and necessary work is supported by the statistics from the last 15 months of the grant. From July 2024, through September 2025, Oxford County received and processed 498 cases and moved to resolution on 181 cases. Each one of those cases represents a violent crime perpetrated against a citizen, and a survivor. The funds for the OVW Rural Grant may no longer be available to fully fund this position, but the need of this position remains, and is as necessary as ever. We have made great progress with our Safe Voices partners through this grant, and we will continue to collaborate with them going forward. That said, we have much work still to do, and the funding for a prosecutor who can dedicate their expertise solely to these types of cases is essential to our continued success going forward.

Sincerely,

A large, bold, black handwritten signature that appears to be "Neil E. McLean Jr." written in a cursive style.

Neil E. McLean Jr.
District Attorney
District 3