

Testimony opposed to:

LD #58: An Act to Improve Information Sharing by Criminal Justice Agencies with Government Agencies Responsible for Investigating Child or Adult Abuse.

Dear Senator, Deschambault, Representative Warren and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety,

My name is Amy Hanscom. I live in Stockton Springs. I am writing testimony to explain why I am opposed to LD #58.

In 2000 I lost custody of my 6-week-old son, who was born 3 months premature. He had to stay in the NICU at EMMC for 3 ½ months. Last year when I requested to review CPS's case file the file was mostly information and reports from before I was pregnant, some even before I began dating my son's father. There was a report stating that I was at the home of an individual when they sold drugs to an informant. That was at least a year before my pregnancy. There were reports of domestic violence between my son's father and his ex-girlfriend, years before we were together. Also, there were reports of physical altercations between my son's father and I, again before I was even pregnant. So, you can see how I was confused when last Wednesday it was explained that if LD 58 was passed it would allow the sharing of information identical to the information that was in my case file from 20 years ago.

The case worker got a Preliminary Protection Order, which meant she convinced the judge that my son was in "immediate risk of serious harm." Never telling the judge that he was in the NICU at EMMC and would not be able to come home for at least 2-3 more weeks. My son had to go two weeks without hearing his mother's voice or feeling her touch. Due to the caseworker having information and reports, I now assume were illegally obtained. The information that if LD 58 is passed would allow CPS to legally access and more importantly use the information against parents in court to substantiate and take their children. I waived my right to the Summary Preliminary Hearing also known as a C-1 hearing. At that hearing, she would have had to prove my son was in immediate danger. Which I do not think she could have done and that is why she convinced me to waive my right to the hearing. With the amount of

corruption surrounding CPS in Maine I do not believe giving them access to information that could be used in an unscrupulous manner is going to help in anyway.

My son is now 20 years old; he is a sophomore at Husson University where he is studying to become a nurse. He did very well in school, he had perfect attendance a number of years, as well as made the honor roll every year. He is a remarkable young man.

A person's past does not define who they are today. I am sure most of you have done something in your past that you regret and would not want to define you today. That is what is happening to me. I never hurt my son, I regained custody of him after 14 months and he has lived with me ever since. This bill would create more harm than good. It will only make it that much easier for there to be more stories like mine. The lack of transparency is concerning to me. Thank you for your time and consideration

Sincerely,

Amy Hanscom