

Meg Libby
South Portland
LD 670

Honorable members of the Maine House,

My name is Meg Libby, I am a resident of South Portland and I am here today to testify in strong support of LD 670. I believe this bill is crucial to protecting vulnerable parents and children from the devastating consequences of psychological manipulation and abuse within the family court system.

My personal experience exemplifies the urgent need for the reforms proposed in LD 670. For years, I endured a pattern of calculated psychological games and manipulation at the hands of my ex-husband, a pattern that ultimately led to the effective kidnapping of my children and severe financial abuse.

My ex-husband systematically used the court system as a weapon. He exploited my pre-existing PTSD, a direct result of prior abuse, and my physical health challenges, twisting these vulnerabilities into tools for manipulation. He presented my legitimate health concerns as evidence of instability and unfitness, effectively weaponizing my trauma against me. I waited too long to leave, and he followed through with every threat he made.

Through carefully crafted narratives and strategic manipulation, he alienated my children from me. My ex-husband used my health conditions and the very nature of my PTSD, which is often misunderstood, to paint me as an unreliable and dangerous parent. This insidious campaign of parental alienation has caused immeasurable harm to my children and me.

Furthermore, my ex-husband weaponized the court system to inflict severe financial abuse. He prolonged legal proceedings, created unnecessary conflict, and exploited the power imbalances inherent in the system to drain my resources. This financial strain compounded the emotional trauma I experienced, making it even more difficult to fight for my children's well-being.

The current system, as it stands, is ill-equipped to recognize and address these subtle yet devastating forms of abuse. LD 670 offers a vital opportunity to:

Educate court personnel: By providing specialized training on the dynamics of psychological abuse, parental alienation, and coercive control, we can equip judges and other professionals to better identify and respond to these harmful behaviors.

Strengthen evidentiary standards: LD 670 will help to ensure that evidence of psychological manipulation is given proper weight in custody and related proceedings.

Protect vulnerable parents and children: By prioritizing the safety and well-being of children, this bill will create a more equitable and just system for all families.

Acknowledge and address financial abuse: LD 670 offers a chance to explore how financial abuse is used within the family court system, and create legislation to protect victims.

My story is not unique. Many parents and children in Maine suffer the consequences of psychological manipulation and abuse within the family court system. LD 670 represents a crucial step towards creating a system that prioritizes the safety and well-being of all its participants. I urge you to support this bill and help protect Maine families from these insidious forms of abuse.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Margaret E. Libby