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President of the Senate

THE MAINE SENATE
132nd Legislature

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Testimony in Support of
LD 1139, “An Act to Provide Funding for Essential Services for Victims of Crimes”
Before the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary
April 17, 2025

Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and Esteemed Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary, my name is Mattie Daughtry. I serve as President of the Maine Senate and proudly represent Senate District 23, including Brunswick, Freeport, Harpswell, Pownal, Chebeague Island, and part of Yarmouth.

I am proud to cosponsor LD 1139, and I thank Senator Carney for her continued leadership in advancing protections and support for victims and survivors.

The federal Victims of Crime Act (VOCA), enacted in 1984, has been a lifeline for survivors across Maine. VOCA funds provide civil and criminal legal assistance, shelter and safety planning, counseling, crisis response, and other essential services that help victims navigate trauma and rebuild their lives.

In recent years, however, we’ve seen steep and repeated cuts to this funding at the federal level. In response, Maine took important steps last session to close some of the gaps, but we now face another projected shortfall. Without additional state funding, programs across our state will be forced to reduce hours, lay off staff, or even close their doors.

LD 1139 responds with urgency and responsibility. It allocates \$6 million in ongoing General Fund support to maintain critical services in the face of declining federal dollars. Just as importantly, it ensures that any unspent funds are carried forward for use in future years—providing much-needed stability for the organizations doing this vital work.

This is not a partisan issue. This is about protecting the safety and dignity of Mainers who have already been harmed. From domestic violence survivors to child victims of abuse, the people who rely on VOCA-funded services deserve a safety net they can count on—not one subject to unpredictable federal budgeting.

I urge the Committee to vote “Ought to Pass” on LD 1139. Now more than ever, Maine must maintain—and strengthen—its commitment to supporting victims of crime.

Thank you for your time, your work, and your commitment to public health and justice.

President of the Senate, Senate District 23
Brunswick, Freeport, Harpswell, Pownal, Chebeague Island, and part of Yarmouth