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Testimony of Rep. Dylan Pugh presenting

LD 1651, An Act to Remove the Term “Alleged” When Referring to Victims of Sexual Assault in the Maine Revised Statutes

Before the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary

Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn and esteemed colleagues of the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary, I am Dylan Pugh and I represent House District 114, which includes part of the City of Portland. I am before you today to present **LD 1651, An Act to Remove the Term “Alleged” When Referring to Victims of Sexual Assault in the Maine Revised Statutes**.

The content of this bill is very straightforward – it simply removes the term “alleged” from the Maine Revised Statutes when referring to victims of sexual assault. By referring to the forensic evidence of the assault or the assault itself as “alleged,” it creates a question of credibility of the victims. By removing the term “alleged,” it legitimizes the assault and the forensic evidence of the assault.

I do want to emphasize that LD 1651 does not change anything regarding the evidence required for sexual assault conviction or any definitions in the Maine Criminal Code. It simply corrects language in existing statute that could create skepticism toward the legitimacy of the assault.

Victims of sexual assault have historically faced an uphill battle in convicting their assailant due to mistrust towards the victim’s account of the assault. I hope you agree with me that we should not continue to reinforce this skepticism towards sexual assault victims in Maine law and vote “Ought to Pass” for LD 1651.

Thank you for your consideration. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.