

# Maine Women's Lobby

THE VOICE OF MAINE WOMEN

Testimony of Whitney Parrish  
Maine Women's Lobby  
In support of LD 748  
An Act To Provide Relief to Survivors of Economic Abuse  
April 2, 2019

Senator Carpenter, Representative Bailey, and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary: my name is Whitney Parrish, Director of Policy and Program for the Maine Women's Lobby. The Maine Women's Lobby is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, statewide membership organization devoted to raising the economic, social, and political status of Maine's 678,000 women and girls.

I am pleased to speak to you today in strong support of LD 748, *An Act To Provide Relief to Survivors of Economic Abuse*.

Maine ranks 23<sup>rd</sup> out of 50 states for the number of working adults experiencing economic security, with only 26% of family households headed by single mothers experiencing economic security.<sup>i</sup> For survivors of domestic violence who experience economic abuse, we know that the effects of these tactics have staggeringly detrimental impacts on the ability to gain short and long-term economic security and stability. There is a reciprocal relationship between domestic violence and economic instability—abuse creates economic instability. In return, economic instability reduces safety options for survivors and makes them more vulnerable to continued violence and isolation.<sup>ii</sup>

According to the Maine Coalition to End Domestic Violence's survey of survivors of domestic violence and economic abuse in Maine, 62% of respondents reported that their abusive partners made it difficult for them to continue to work at their current place of employment.<sup>iii</sup> Job instability and unequal access to finances were noted as significant factors contributing to lack of economic security. Eighty-one percent indicated that economic abuse committed by their partners made it difficult for them to separate from that partner.<sup>iv</sup>

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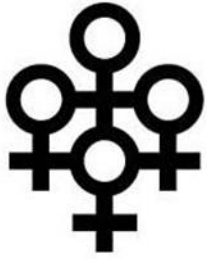
<sup>i</sup> "Basic Economic Security in Maine: How Much Income Do Working Adults Need?" Institute for Women's Policy Research. October 2018. Accessed at [https://iwpr.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/R558\\_Maine.pdf](https://iwpr.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/R558_Maine.pdf)

<sup>ii</sup> "A Report on the Impact of Economic Abuse on Survivors of Domestic Violence in Maine." Maine Coalition to End Domestic Violence. 2019. Accessed at [https://www.mcedv.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Economic-Abuse-Report\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.mcedv.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Economic-Abuse-Report_FINAL.pdf).

<sup>iii</sup> Ibid.

<sup>iv</sup> Ibid.

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Lack of economic security and stability often continues after a survivor leaves an abusive relationship. Nearly all respondents (93%) reported that the abuse they experienced affected their ability to meet daily needs such as obtaining food, shelter and clothing.<sup>v</sup> Not only does this have deep, lasting effects on the survivor themselves, but it often traumatically impacts the survivor's children as they scramble to make ends meet and carry on with life.

We believe that to fully support survivors of domestic violence, we must recognize the long-term impacts of economic abuse and find ways to make sure that survivors are comprehensively supported throughout their journey toward safety and stability. LD 748 seeks to do this by increasing safety for survivors by clearly defining economic abuse in statute and alleviating financial burdens that result from economic abuse. We strongly urge you to vote ought to pass on LD 748. Thank you for your time.

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<sup>v</sup> Ibid.