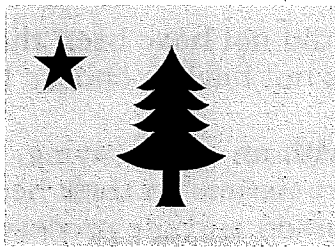


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STATE OF MAINE  
OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY  
PROSECUTORIAL DISTRICT IV

May 1, 2023

Senator Hickman, Representative Supica, and Honorable members of the Veterans and Legal Affairs Committee, my name is Maeghan Maloney, I am the District Attorney for Kennebec and Somerset Counties but here today as a member of the board of the Sisters in Arms Center. I also served on the Governor's Advisory Council on Military Sexual Trauma and you have our recommendations before you today. Thus I am in support of LD 1783, **An Act to Implement the Recommendations of the Governor's Advisory Council on Military Sexual Trauma.**

While I was having a discussion of LD 1783, a woman veteran said to me, "If those changes had been in place when I was in the Guard, I wouldn't be a veteran—I would still be in uniform." She went on to explain the greatest regret of her life was leaving the Guard after 12 years of service. If she had been given the option of paid leave, she would have taken it. Today, she would still be serving all of us in the Guard. Instead, we lost a soldier. With the changes before you, a different result will be possible.

To give you a greater understanding of the importance of these changes, I want to share with you her words:

"As a survivor myself, I know all too well how daunting and frankly, re-traumatizing the process of reporting, participating in an investigation, and facing one's perpetrator in an administrative hearing can be. When I signed the DD form 2910 for an unrestricted report of sexual assault, I not only wanted to support the young woman in me, the one who was assaulted, but I also wanted to be a leader for those who are too afraid to come forward. When I participated in the investigative process, I constantly felt like the enemy. I would ask to leave 30 minutes early from work or arrive a few minutes late in order to seek care for my mental health and I would be met with resistance. Every time I would try to express that I was stressed or not feeling well, I was challenged with remarks of how I am not doing a good job anymore and that my case was really weighing me down. Ultimately, I was offered to be medically boarded and I accepted. In that moment I wanted and needed the pain to stop, so I accepted. I needed to be able to take a break and focus on healing. I continuously felt like the organization that I loved did not love me back. Had I been offered the opportunity to take paid leave while undergoing the investigation, I would still be in uniform today. I loved serving in the Guard and wish daily that I still was. I needed space to heal and the ability to do so. Choosing between my health and

keeping a roof over my head should not have been the only options for me but they were. This bill will help survivors not have to choose between their basic human needs and their mental health.”

The survivor followed up with an email saying, “I really just want them to know that this bill not only will support victims on their healing but allow them to still live. Assault takes so much from a person and the process takes more.”

I am grateful to this survivor for her willingness to trust me with her words, to our legislative sponsor, Rep. Morgan Rielly, to the National Guard members, the Adjutant General, and to all of those who worked tirelessly on the Governor’s Council. This legislation is an example of how we can make significant positive changes by working together. Thank you.

I urge you to vote in favor of LD 1783.

Thank you for your consideration,

*/s/ Maeghan Maloney*

Maeghan Maloney