

United States District Court



District of Maine

**IMPROVING PRO BONO REPRESENTATION
FOR
VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE**

In 2018, Congress enacted the Pro Bono Work to Empower and Represent Act of 2018 (“POWER) Act to have every U.S. District Court in the country host events to engage lawyers to provide pro bono legal assistance to victims of domestic violence. The Maine Board of Overseers of the Bar has approved this program for 1.5 general continuing legal educational credits.

PANELISTS

Darcie N. McElwee

U.S. Attorney

District of Maine

[District of Maine | Department of Justice](#)

Darcie N. McElwee was sworn in as the United States Attorney for the District of Maine on October 8, 2021. U.S. Attorney McElwee was nominated by President Joseph R. Biden Jr. on August 10, 2021, and confirmed by the U.S. Senate on October 5, 2021.

Prior to becoming U.S. Attorney, she served as an Assistant U.S. Attorney in the District of Maine for over 19 years. She primarily prosecuted violent crimes such as sex trafficking, interstate domestic violence and child sexual exploitation, as well as firearms and arson offenses. She also served as Maine’s Project Safe Neighborhoods Coordinator for approximately 16 years. She began her legal career as an Assistant District Attorney for Penobscot and Piscataquis counties from 1998 to 2002. Darcie grew up in Caribou.

Francine Garland Stark

Executive Director

[Maine Coalition to End Domestic Violence](#)

Francine@mcedv.org

Francine Garland Stark has been a leader in the movement to end domestic violence for over 35 years. She worked at Spruce Run Association - now Partners for Peace - in Penobscot County from 1986-2009 and as Executive Director of Hope and Justice Project in Aroostook County from 2009-2015. As Executive Director of MCEDV since 2015, she leads

Maine's statewide efforts to foster justice, education, and culture change and to develop public policy to prevent and mitigate the impact of abuse and violence. She serves on the Governor's Commission on Domestic and Sexual Abuse, the Domestic Abuse Homicide Review Panel, the Justice Assistance Council, the Elder Justice Coordinating Council, the Justice for Children Task Force, the Deadly Force Review Panel, and the Maine Criminal Justice Academy Board of Trustees.

Originally from Chapman and now Surry, Maine, Francine is a graduate of Bates College. She has received several awards in recognition of her work. Francine's work is inspired and informed by her grandmothers' and sisters' experiences of domestic abuse and violence as well as her own history of sexual violence.

Patrisha McLean

Founder/President

[Finding Our Voices](#)

hello@findingourvoices.net

Patrisha McLean is a photojournalist and the founder/president of [FindingOurVoices](#), the survivor-powered, grassroots nonprofit breaking the silence of domestic abuse across Maine. Patrisha's own silence of 29 years was broken in 2016 with the domestic violence arrest of her then-husband, singer/songwriter Don McLean.

Rick Doyle, Esq.

Managing Partner

[NextStep Domestic Violence Project](#)

Hancock & Washington Counties

Rick Doyle is Managing Attorney at Next Step Domestic Violence Project, providing civil legal representation, primarily in PFA actions and family matters, to survivors of domestic violence in Hancock and Washington Counties. Rick served on the Maine Commission on Domestic and Sexual Abuse.

Elizabeth Stout, Esq.

Executive Director

[Maine Volunteer Lawyers Project](#)

estout@vlp.org

Elizabeth Stout is the Executive Director of the Maine Volunteer Lawyers Project. She is a 1990 graduate of the University of Maine School of Law. Liz was a family law attorney in southern Maine for most of her career. She launched the Maine Community Law Center, a low-bono law incubator, in 2015, and joined VLP in September of 2020.

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**Improving Pro Bono Assistance
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Victims of Domestic Violence**

















The Woman on the
Bridge

NY Times

US v. Nelson Jean Dion

37 F.4th 31 (1st Cir. 2022)

Case Synopsis

Background: Following denial of his motion to dismiss, [2020 WL 1450441](#), defendant pled guilty in the United States District Court for the District of Maine, [George Z. Singal](#), J., to interstate violation of protection order, and he appealed.

Holdings: The Court of Appeals, [Selya](#), Circuit Judge, held that:

- 1 no-contact order imposed in felony aggravated assault case was in force at time defendant violated it;
 - 2 state court's conditional release order constituted “protection order” under Violence Against Women Act (VAWA);
 - 3 as matter of first impression, no-contact and stay-away provisions of conditional release order may, under certain circumstances, constitute “protection order” as defined in VAWA; and
 - 4 VAWA provided constitutionally adequate notice to defendant that crossing state lines to violate protection order would subject him to federal prosecution.
- Affirmed.

For CLE Credit, contact
Lindsey_Tully@med.uscourts.gov and include your
Maine Bar Number.

Domestic Abuse and Violence Data

- Statistically, **1 in 4 women** and **1 in 9 men** will experience domestic violence in their lifetime.
- Native American women are 2-3x more likely to experience violence (more than 4 out of 5) than women of any other race.
- Between **5,000 – 6,000 protection from abuse orders** are filed in Maine each year.

Domestic Abuse and Violence Data

- Maine courts process between **4,000 – 5,000 criminal cases** of domestic abuse and violence each year.
- The majority of all domestic violence incidents are never reported to police.
- In 2021, 221 children in Maine accessed emergency shelter with their parent at a domestic violence resource center.

Maine's Domestic Abuse Homicide Review Panel ([13th Biennial Report – 20 year Lookback](#))

- An average of 50% and up to 69% of perpetrators exhibited **suicidal behavior** prior to attempting or committing homicide.
- At least 50% of perpetrators **stalked** their victims prior to committing homicide, including using social media to maintain a presence in their victims' lives.
- Women who experience **non-fatal strangulation** are 750% more likely to be killed.

How Does Economic Abuse Impact Survivors?

([A Report on the Impact of Economic Abuse in Maine, 2019](#))

- **Impairs a Survivor's Ability to Separate:** 81% of survivors cite economic abuse as a barrier to separating from the abuser.
- **Impairs Employability and Wage Growth:** For 62% of survivors, abusers interfered with their ability to maintain employment (turning off alarm clocks, hiding car keys, physical injury, refusing to provide agreed upon childcare, intimidating co-workers).
- **Impairs Credit Long Term:** 57% of survivors reported the abuser incurred debt in their names, and 72% reported abusers lied about paying the bills.
- **Impacts Resources for Children:** Of survivors who reported impacts on their children, 85% reported that their abuser's economic tactics made it difficult for them to provide for their children's basic daily needs.

MCEDV's Liberation Fund: Providing Direct Economic Supports for Survivors

Between October 2021 and March 2022, **\$111,567** was paid to or on behalf of survivors to help support their efforts **to live free from abuse and violence**. This project is supported through local philanthropy and individual donations.

Common Needs:

- Retainer fees for legal representation
- Car repairs
- Security deposits and/or moving expenses/storage
- Home repairs

Help is available statewide.

Find 24/7 resources [here](#).

Learn more about our work supporting survivors and their children [here](#).



MCEDV MEMBERS:

AROOSTOOK

Hope and Justice Project

PENOBSCOT & PISCATAQUIS

Partners for Peace

KENNEBEC & SOMERSET

Family Violence Project

HANCOCK & WASHINGTON

NextStep Domestic Violence Project

**ANDROSCOGGIN,
FRANKLIN & OXFORD**

Safe Voices

**KNOX, LINCOLN,
SAGADAHOC & WALDO**

New Hope Midcoast

CUMBERLAND

Through These Doors

YORK

Caring Unlimited

CULTURALLY SPECIFIC SERVICES

Immigrant Resource Center of Maine

mcedv.org