

April 10, 2023

Senator Carney, Representative Moonen, and members of the Judiciary Committee, thank you very much for taking the time to hear testimony on LD 1435 and LD 1436. My name is Robin Miller, and I am an advisory council member for the Oregon Department of Justice's Human Trafficking Advisory Committee, a board member for the "EPIK Project" and a founding member of the "Northwest Survivor Alliance". I am writing today to ask you to **support LDs 1435 An Act to Reduce Commercial Sexual Exploitation and LD 1436 An Act to Provide Remedies for Survivors of Commercial Sexual Exploitation**.

As a survivor and lived-experience expert of the sex trade, as well as a direct service provider to youth, young adults and adults impacted by the sex trade, I stand firm in support of the proposed legislation. In the six years I was trafficked in street prostitution, I cannot tell you how many times I was arrested. I was beaten and raped by the men who bought me and the man who sold me. Neither party(s) were ever held accountable for the abuse, but I was. I can attest to this still happening today across the country, because not only do I serve youth and young adults who are held in detention for crimes directly related to their trafficking and who are bound to fines and restitution to be paid directly to the adult men who purchased them for sex, as well my colleagues and national partners are reporting the same thing.

By supporting *LDs 1435*, you can put an end to the abuse of marginalized groups in the sex trade by holding the true criminals responsible while providing services and care to those bought and sold. I am fortunate to have had the opportunity to vacate most of my prostitution charges from my record and strongly believe that had I not, I wouldn't be where I am today. For years before my record was cleared, I walked into every interview with trepidation and fear. Despite my education and relevant experience, I knew I would be judged. I recently had to go through an intensive background check for a job I have intermittently held since I was 15, working at a gymnastics club. The thought of not passing the screening nearly made me quit. Because of my access to vacatur, I still have that job as well, the job I have working in direct service with victims and survivors, some as young as 12 years old. Most individuals in the sex trade enter as children or young adults through means of force, fraud, or coercion. They also enter the trade because there is little to no other choice for them to meet their most basic needs (housing, food insecurity, lack of employment opportunities). When there are real alternatives, we create off-ramps for those exploited in the commercial sex industry and we shrink the sex trade and reduce exploitation.

Please vote yes on **LD 1435 An Act to Reduce Commercial Sexual Exploitation and LD 1436 An Act to Provide Remedies for Survivors of Commercial Sexual Exploitation**. Please feel free to reach out to me for any additional comment or questions you may have regarding my testimony and lived experience in the sex trade. Thank you again for your time and attention to this matter and for serving your constituents in Maine.

Sincerely,

Robin Miller

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