

Janet T. Mills  
Governor



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Jeanne M. Lambrew, Ph.D.  
Commissioner

April 11, 2023

Senator Anne Carney, Chair  
Representative Matt Moonen, Chair  
Members, Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary  
100 State House Station  
Augusta, ME 04333-0100

Re: LD 1436 – *An Act to Provide Remedies for Survivors of Commercial Sexual Exploitation*

Senator Carney, Representative Moonen, and Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary:

This letter is to provide information regarding OCFS opposition to LD 1436, *An Act to Provide Remedies for Survivors of Commercial Sexual Exploitation*. This bill would eliminate the crime of engaging in prostitution, provide for the sealing of a record for a former crime of engaging in prostitution, and establish a stakeholder group within the Department of Health and Human Services to identify funds that may be used to provide services to those who have experienced violence associated with commercial sexual exploitation (with an associated report to the Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee). LD 1436 would also require that the Department of Public Safety report on the number of convictions for certain crimes, fines imposed, requests regarding sealing, and support services provided.

OCFS strongly supports services and supports for victims of commercial sexual exploitation and human trafficking, but has concern about the establishment of a stakeholder group given that much of this work is already being done by the Maine Coalition to End Sexual Assault (MECASA). OCFS does not currently have capacity to participate in or support the proposed workgroup in addition to the work already underway and would need additional resources to engage as required in this bill. Furthermore, OCFS believes that significant stakeholder engagement has already occurred through the Crime Victimization Study and the [2022 State of Maine Victim Needs Assessment](#) (VNA) which was published last summer by the University of Southern Maine acting under contract with the Department to complete the Federally required needs assessment. Human trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation were a part of the VNA which is intended to inform the Department of the current needs of crime victims and recommend strategies for meeting those needs in accordance with the Federal Victim of Crime Act (VOCA) requirements.

In addition, OCFS funds MECASA's work on human trafficking. In FFY22, their contract with the Department facilitated MECASA to distribute nearly \$30,000 through their Human Trafficking Survivor Fund to meet the immediate needs of survivors, including shelter, healthcare, technology, clothing, food, etc. MECASA also offers support group to survivors of human trafficking and referrals to services of survivors.

We wanted you to be aware of the above information as you consider this bill going forward. If you have any further questions, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Todd A. Landry". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Dr. Todd A. Landry  
Director  
Office of Child and Family Services