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February 13 and 24, 2025

To Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary

Regarding L.D. 332, “An Act to Establish Mandatory Minimum Sentences for Gross Sexual Assaults Against Children and Aggravated Sex Trafficking of Children”.

Sen. Carney, Rep. Kuhn, and members of the Judiciary Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony before you today. I’m Penny Morrell, taxpayer and citizen of the Town of Belgrade, Maine.

I support LD 332, “An Act to Establish Mandatory Minimum Sentences for Gross Sexual Assaults Against Children and Aggravated Sex Trafficking of Children”.

Being a victim of child sexual assault myself, and knowing the harm it causes a life, this law is long overdue and in need of 100% support. The justice system in our land is broken and there is no penalty for crimes committed, commensurate with them, especially in this area.

Those who commit such atrocities to children must pay the full penalty under the law without suspension. A deterrent, harsh penalty, is necessary to discourage such behavior against an innocent child. One who has been convicted for such a heinous act, not incarcerated, and does again, should never see the light of day outside of prison for the rest of his life.

It is documented that trafficking of children is a huge problem in Maine. Testimonies from previous legislative sessions bear that out, especially along the I-95 corridor. Children need government protection, and perpetrators of this and other sexual crimes against children need harsh government punishment.

I urge this committee to vote “ought to pass” on LD 332. Thank you.