

**Testimony in support of LD 1805
to the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary**

May 12, 2025

Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary:

My name is Sarah Johnson and I am a resident of Sanford.

I am writing in support of LD 1805 An Act to Establish a Post-conviction Review Process for Crimes Committed by Victims of Sex Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation.

As noted by a 2019 US State Department report, [protecting victims from wrongful prosecution and further victimization is required to also protect civilian security, democracy and human rights](#). *“For years, the Trafficking in Persons Report has detailed the importance of protecting victims of human trafficking throughout the law enforcement process. A central tenet of the victim-centered approach is that victims of trafficking should not be held criminally responsible for their involvement in unlawful activities that are a direct result of their victimization. At the heart of human trafficking is the use of force, fraud, or coercion to exploit a person. Law enforcement authorities often fail to properly screen and identify victims of human trafficking when they detain or arrest criminal suspects. This can result in re-victimization when victims are punished for their engagement in the crimes their traffickers forced them to commit. Compounding the injustice, a criminal record can have a profoundly negative effect on victims throughout their lives. Even if a trafficking victim never faces charges, or if charges are dropped, arrest records and stigma remain, affecting where victims live, their employment opportunities, and how others perceive them.”*

It is impossible to process the level of fear and complete lack of control to protect yourself or your children that victims of sex trafficking and exploitation endure. Their resulting actions should not be prosecuted. I hope you will offer the support LD 1805 can provide to victims. Please support this bill.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sarah Johnson

Sanford, Maine

<https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/283800.pdf>