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May 12, 2025

Senator Anne Carney - Chair
Representative Any Kuhn - Chair
Committee on Judiciary
100 State House Station Room 438
Augusta, ME 04330

RE: LD 1877: An Act to Increase Penalties for Human Trafficking Offenses

Dear Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and Members of the Judiciary Committee:

MACDL opposes LD 1877.

There is no need for a new felony crime of sex trafficking. As with many bills that MACDL has testified on this legislative session and past legislative sessions, the increase of a crime from a misdemeanor to a felony is a very serious matter. Only in situations where a judge has indicated that 364 days in jail is not enough for a particular crime should this Committee even consider elevating a crime from a misdemeanor to a felony. While sex trafficking is a serious crime, the law already fully and completely addresses this issue by making the particular conduct a crime for which there are already serious punishments.

Additionally, there is no need for an increased classification for aggravated sex trafficking. Currently, aggravated sex trafficking carries a maximum penalty of up to 5 years in prison. LD 1877 proposes to increase the maximum penalty to 20 years in prison. MACDL believes that this Committee should only consider elevating a class of crime from a Class C to a Class B when there is clear data to support the idea that judges have indicated that 5 years in prison is insufficient. MACDL is aware of no such evidence.

LD 1877 proposes a mandatory minimum sentence of 10 years in prison for aggravated sex trafficking. MACDL opposes mandatory minimum sentences as it eliminates individualized sentences. Every crime, every defendant, and every victim is unique and sentences should be tailored to the specific facts and individuals involved.

This committee, presumably, puts significant time and energy into evaluating judicial candidates and their ability to make decisions. Judges should not be limited in their options on what sentences to impose because they will be in the best possible position to evaluate what is the fair and just result given the facts presented to them.

Thank you for the opportunity to address the committee on this very important topic.

MACDL urges this committee to vote ought not to pass.

Sincerely,

/s/

Jeremy Pratt, Esq.,
President, MACDL