

May 12, 2025

**ME House Judiciary Committee**

**RE: LD 1805 - An Act to Establish a Post-conviction Review Process for Crimes Committed by Victims of Sex Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation.**

Dear Honorable Members of the Maine House Judiciary Committee,

On behalf of TJP Advocacy, I write today to request your support on LD 1805 - An Act to Establish a Post-conviction Review Process for Crimes Committed by Victims of Sex Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation. This important legislation will combat commercial sexual exploitation by providing needed relief for victims of human trafficking.

In 2023, Maine led the way in practicing evidence-based and trauma-informed practices for deterring sex trafficking by passing of LD 1435 An Act to Reduce Commercial Sexual Exploitation, and LD 1436 An Act to Provide Remedies for Survivors of Commercial Sexual Exploitation led by the late Rep. Lois Reckitt. These law changes provided both safety and relief for those being exploited for sex by allowing for post-conviction relief through sealing for those who have been exploited either through circumstance or force as a victim of sex trafficking. These legal changes set Maine to lead the charge in curbing sex trafficking and exploitation within the state and nation, as well as created pathways for victims of sexual abuse and exploitation to freedom.

LD 1805 builds upon this important work by expanding post-conviction relief for victims of sex trafficking and exploitation for crimes they are forced to commit during their victimization. Similar bills have been passed in many states around the country, with 46 states passing some kind of post-conviction relief legislation for victims of trafficking, according to [Allies Against Slavery's State Human Trafficking Report](#). It is widely known that victims of sex trafficking and exploitation are forced to commit crimes during the course of their victimization. The burden of criminal records frequently hinders victims from gaining access to employment, housing, education, and more. As part of the [National Survivor Study](#) looking at the impact of criminal records on sex and labor trafficking victims, 40% of survivor respondents reported some kind of criminal record as a result of their trafficking experience. Of those, 69% responded that criminal records kept them from getting or keeping a job, 59% responded that their record affected their ability to get good, safe housing, 63% reported their record affected their ability to receive education, training, or a professional license and another 35% responded that their criminal record affected their custody of their children. Criminal relief, beyond that for solely prostitution-related offenses, is necessary to provide adequate support to survivors of sex trafficking and exploitation.

TJP Advocacy is a 501c (4) organization and is the action arm of The Jensen Project, a private operating foundation, supporting non-profits and individuals through strategic grants, resources, and holistic help. The Jensen Project was founded by Janet Jensen. Janet is a rape survivor and

advocates committed to being a strategic partner in filling the needs of organizations in the fight against sexual violence by providing opportunities to expand their leadership skills and find a network of like-minded professionals to get support with staffing, cash flow, fundraising, operations, day-to-day questions, and more.

TJP Advocacy is committed to the fight to end commercial sexual exploitation by providing ongoing support and advocacy on behalf of survivors of exploitation and trafficking.

As LD 1805 is reviewed by the House Judiciary Committee, TJP Advocacy strongly urges you to consider and support this legislation. LD 1805 will have a significant impact on the lives of survivors and allow survivors to rebuild their lives and livelihood.

For any questions on this bill and the impact it will have on survivors of human trafficking, please do not hesitate to reach out.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Sarah Johnston Ellis". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Sarah" being more prominent and the last name "Ellis" following in a similar style.

Sarah Johnston Ellis  
Director  
TJP Advocacy