

## **In Support of**

L.D. 1805, An Act to Establish a Post-conviction Review Process for Crimes Committed by Victims of Sex Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation

L.D. 1856, An Act Directing the Maine Commission on Public Defense Services to Assist Persons Filing Post-Judgment Motions to Seal Criminal History Record Information

L.D. 1871, An Act to Permit Sealing Criminal History Record Information of Victims of Sex Trafficking or Sexual Exploitation

May 12, 2025

Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn and Honorable Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary, my name is Kasie Kirkham, I live in Knox County, and I'm a survivor of sex trafficking. I'm here today to share my story and advocate in support of bills - LD 1805, LD 1856, and LD 1871.

I was trafficked for years in Maine and Florida starting at the age of 16. My trafficker manipulated and controlled me, forcing me into prostitution and other crimes. I was arrested multiple times, charged with crimes that were directly related to my trafficking. I was unable to get away without being left with little to no resources.

In court, I didn't have the resources or support to explain my situation. For a long time, I didn't even understand that I was a victim.

I was unaware that I was being trafficked for many years.

I was convicted and sentenced for crimes without anyone understanding the full context of my actions. And without any consideration of my inability to refuse to take part.

The trauma and shame I felt were overwhelming.

Years later, I found help and began to rebuild my life. But the criminal convictions continued to haunt me, making it hard to find housing, employment, and stability. I felt like I was still trapped.

These bills can change that for others like me. L.D. 1805 gives victims a chance to have their convictions reversed if they can prove the crimes were a result of trafficking. L.D. 1871 allows us to seal our records, giving us a fresh start. And L.D. 1856 ensures that victims have access to the resources they need to navigate the process.

I urge you to pass all of these bills. They can help break the cycle of trauma and give survivors like me a chance to heal and rebuild. We deserve a second chance. Thank you.