

LD 524 - Support MOU

An Act to Reduce Trafficking in the State

Submitted to the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary
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Submitted by:

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Chair, Senator, Representatives, and Members of the Judiciary Committee:

My name is **Rev. Danielle E. Stubenrod**, and I submit this testimony **in strong support of LD 524, An Act to Reduce Trafficking in the State**.

I am a Marine Corps veteran, a chaplain, a survivor of sexual violence, and the Executive Director of **Broken to Beautiful**, a community-based support network serving survivors across Maine and New England. I fully support the Legislature’s commitment to reducing trafficking in Maine and believe LD 524 is a necessary, timely, and morally urgent step forward.

Trafficking is not hypothetical in our state. It is happening in our cities, in our small towns, in our tribal communities, along our transportation corridors, and in the lives of people who often remain unseen. LD 524 acknowledges that reality and moves us toward a safer, more unified Maine.

But I also believe we can go even further.

THE DIRIGO STANDARD: “Maine Leads.”

Our state motto — **Dirigo**, “I Lead” — calls us not to be reactive, but visionary.

LD 524 is a strong bill on its own, and supporting it is necessary. But Maine should aim higher than meeting current best practices. We should create the **Diamond Standard** of anti-trafficking policy — the clearest, strongest, most survivor-centered standard in the nation.

The Dirigo Standard builds on LD 524 by embracing five principles:

1. Unbreakable Survivor Protections

Survivors deserve systems that protect them without exception. No loopholes, no ambiguity, no retraumatization. LD 524 contributes to this goal, and Maine can continue strengthening definitions, procedures, and statewide consistency.

2. Sharpened Deterrence

Our laws must be structured so that traffickers — and the organized networks behind them — look at Maine and say, “Not there.”

LD 524 reinforces Maine’s stance, but the Dirigo Standard pushes us toward stronger penalties and clearer prosecutorial tools.

3. A Fully Coordinated Statewide Framework

LD 524 moves us forward, and the next step is full coordination between:

- DHHS
- law enforcement
- prosecutors
- hospitals and emergency departments
- tribal governments
- LGBTQ+ service providers
- veterans’ services
- youth and homelessness organizations

A united front is the most effective front.

4. Prevention, Education & Early Intervention

We must prevent trafficking at the root:

housing instability, economic coercion, youth vulnerability, untreated trauma, discrimination, and lack of education.

LD 524 lays the foundation; the Dirigo Standard builds the long-term strategy.

5. Survivor-Led Vision & Lived-Experience Expertise

As a survivor myself, I can say with conviction that policy is strongest when survivors are shaping its direction. LD 524 can become part of a broader survivor-informed legislative blueprint.

EXPANDING LD 524'S VISION

While LD 524 stands firmly as a complete bill, its passage opens several opportunities that I urge the Committee to consider moving forward:

- **Creation of a Statewide Anti-Trafficking Coordinating Council**
- **Mandatory trauma-informed training across law enforcement, judiciary, and healthcare**
- **Clear expungement pathways for survivor-compelled offenses**
- **Greater support for LGBTQ+, BIPOC, and veteran survivors**
- **Expansion of Safe Harbor protections for vulnerable youth**
- **A survivor-centered statewide housing and stabilization pipeline**

These steps build upon — not replace — LD 524.

Together, they form the *Dirigo Standard*: a unified strategy with the Diamond Standard of clarity, strength, and unbreakability.

MY COMMITMENT: READY TO ROLL UP MY SLEEVES

I want the Committee to know that I am not here to simply endorse a bill on paper.

I am here because I believe in the mission behind LD 524, and I am ready to assist in any capacity that helps Maine lead this fight.

As a Marine, a minister, a survivor, and an advocate, I stand ready to roll up my sleeves and help refine, coordinate, and advance the broader anti-trafficking framework that LD 524 points us toward.

Whether that involves advisory work, community coordination, survivor-centered insight, or policy development, I am here and ready to serve.

LD 524 strengthens Maine.

The Dirigo Standard ensures Maine leads the nation.

Conclusion

I respectfully urge the Committee to **advance LD 524** and to embrace the broader vision that Maine can — and should — set the **Diamond Standard** of anti-trafficking protections. Our motto is not a suggestion. It is a charge:

Dirigo — I Lead. And Maine must lead in protecting its people from exploitation.

Thank you for your time, your service, and your dedication to justice.

It is an honor to stand with you and support LD 524.

Respectfully submitted,

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Executive Director / Citizen Advocate, Broken to Beautiful

Vassalboro, Maine

Deril Stubenrod
Vassalboro
LD 524

My legal name is still "Deril" and I am changing it to Danielle to match my gender identity and ask that I be addressed as Danielle and that feminine pronouns be used when addressing me please. My support memo is attached and I am proud to stand in support of the bill.