

Janet T. Mills
Governor

Sara Gagne-Holmes
Commissioner



Maine Department of Health and Human Services
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February 4, 2026

Senator Ingwersen, Chair
Representative Meyer, Chair
Members, Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services
100 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333-0100

Re: LD 2136 – *An Act to Support Victims of Trafficking in Maine in Response to Federal Funding Cuts*

Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide information neither for nor against LD 2136, *An Act to Support Victims of Trafficking in Maine in Response to Federal Funding Cuts*.

This bill would provide one-time funding of \$317,000 to anti-trafficking services due to a delay in expected federal funding.

The Department recognizes the importance of programs that provide anti-trafficking services in Maine and the concerns with the impact of disruptions from federal funding cuts. However, it is not clear that the funding is still needed. Though the application process for these anti-trafficking grants was temporarily delayed, it has now been issued. Therefore, it is unclear whether these additional funds are necessary at this time.

While the Department is supportive of efforts to assure continuity of necessary services and provider sustainability, establishing an expectation that the State holds financial responsibility if and when federal funding is interrupted could have significant unintended consequences, particularly given the current turbulence in the federal funding landscape. The Department can and will continue working with providers under existing frameworks to address any concerns or challenges associated with federal funding externally of legislative action.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions during your deliberation of this bill.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sarah Squirrell".

Sarah Squirrell
Director
Office of Behavioral Health
Maine Department of Health and Human Services