

**Testimony in Opposition to LD 1435**  
**April 10, 2023**

Dear Senator Carney, Representative Moonen, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on the Judiciary,

My name is Trisha Newalu. I am a sex worker that has engaged in almost every facet of sex work, for 23 years.

I am also the founder of Erotic Laborers Alliance of New England. We provide services to trafficking survivors. We work with anti violence and harm reduction organizations. We also provide practical resources to those engaged in sex work as consensual adults throughout New England. Our New England community expands to include representation of male, non-binary, trans, and LGBTQA sex workers and not just cisgender women.

I'm here today to represent my community and myself. I would like to express **opposition to LD 1435: An act to reduce commercial sexual exploitation.**

The full service adult consensual sex work business brings in an estimated 14 billion dollars annually in the United States. There are estimated to be 2 million full service sex workers, though experts believe this number to be an underestimate.

We find that the use of the blanket language "Commercial sexual exploitation" is harmful to our community.

This harmful language can also be stigmatizing to legal laborers of sex trade such as exotic dancers, adult entertainment content producers, WebCam models, and nude models.

To criminalize and further victimize those who have been coerced or forced in to sex work is not helpful in assisting survivors to exit that abuse. Adult sex work is often a consensual choice, not an exploitative one. It is important to not confuse or categorize the two as the same, as "commercial sexual exploitation."

**Sexual exploitation:** (defined as) Non-consensual sex or sexual activity for someone else's gain

Not to be conflated with

**Sex trafficking:** (defined as) Any exchange of money, goods, or services for sex or sex acts, through force, fraud, or coercion.

Or

**Sex workers:** (defined as) Adults who receive money or goods in exchange for consensual sexual services or erotic performances, either regularly or occasionally.

While some believe that all sex workers only do this work because it is their only option for survival, it is not true for all. To place the entire community under this dangerous assumption further perpetuates the notion that sex workers have no agency and that sex work is not real work. Full service adult consensual sex work includes transaction, choice and consent among those involved.

I sit here before you today perfectly capable of making choices about my own body. My monetization of my bodily autonomy has proven to be a successful career choice. I have never once been coerced and I have never needed to be saved.

I was raised in poverty, I saved myself from my socioeconomic status by means of adult consensual sex work. I am not an anomaly.

Someone you know may be a sex worker. Most of our community members are voters, taxpayers, and some are even in the PTA.

As a voice of the erotic Laborers who reside in Maine I ask you to please acknowledge the harm in categorizing sex workers as victims being exploited. The stigma, shame and lack of agency in conflation to exploitation causes harm to many of our community members who are just trying to put food on the table for their families.

Thank you for hearing me today. I'm open to any questions.

Trisha Newalu  
Erotic Laborers Alliance of New England