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MAINE PROSECUTORS ASSOCIATION **SHIRA BURNS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

**“An Act Extending the Statute of Limitations on Criminal Actions
Involving Aggravated Sex Trafficking”
Before the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary
Public Hearing Date: April 14, 2025
Testimony in Support of LD 1427**

Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary. My name is Shira Burns and I represent the Maine Prosecutors Association. I am here to testify in support of LD 1427. We would like to thank Representative Henderson for her sponsorship of this bill and her continued quest to look for ways to hold sexual assault offenders accountable for their actions and in doing so provide for victim safety.

Last session, in this committee, we discussed a lot about the prevalence of delayed disclosures and the need to extend the statute of limitations on sex crimes. Those efforts were successful and our laws are becoming more in sync with reality of how victims process and disclose their trauma. This bill is one more step forward. This bill proposes a 20 year statute of limitations which is consistent with many other sexual violence offenses. At present time, the statute of limitations for aggravated sex trafficking is 6 years from the time the crime was committed.¹ That means, as the law stands, a child who is trafficked for sex is expected to process their trauma, get their lives into a place where they feel safe and are able to disclose, actually disclose to law enforcement, and have a full investigation completed within 6 years of the abuse. That timeline is not consistent with reality.

The change in this statute will not have far reaching effects on many people’s lives in regard to numbers. Disclosure of this crime has so many challenges and that gets even more complicated when the criminal justice system gets involved. However, for the victims of this crime that do disclose, where successful prosecution of their offender is a viable option, those victims deserve a timeline for prosecution that better align with the facts we know about delayed disclosure in sexual violence cases.

For those reasons, the Maine Prosecutors Association supports LD 1427.

¹ 17-A M.R.S. § 8(2).