

# STATE OF MAINE

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DISTRICT VIII

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

**“An Act to Increase Penalties for Human Trafficking Offenses”**  
Before the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary  
Public Hearing Date: May 12, 2025  
Testimony in Opposition of LD 1877

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 opposition of LD 1877.

Maine Prosecutors Association absolutely want to hold offenders accountable for human trafficking offenses and we appreciate the sentiment behind the enhancements. As prosecutors work with victims of this crime type, we constantly balance the public safety concerns against the ongoing trauma the victim faces by interacting with the criminal legal system.

Mandatory minimum sentences do not take into account how much a victim wants to participate in the criminal legal system. Many victims want to avoid going through the trial process and ask the prosecutor to offer a plea that would be less than these mandatory minimum sentences. Prosecutors are also dependent on what evidence is available at trial to prove the case beyond a reasonable doubt. This is all taken into consideration when a prosecutor recommends a certain plea agreement.

Mandatory minimum sentences lead to more trials, which might not have favorable outcome for the victim, and different charging decisions being made. Going to trial on some of these cases where there could have been a plea agreement, the State risks losing the victim hearing their abuser take responsibility for their actions, a definite term of imprisonment, and supervision when the offender is released from incarceration. This bill as written also sets maximums which is out of step with our criminal code.

We do support mandatory consideration of restitution and an enhanced victim compensation fund assessment for convictions.

For these reasons, the Maine Prosecutors Association is in opposition of LD 1877 and happy to work with anyone in this room on new laws that can create trauma-informed, victim-centered processes that will lead to holding offenders accountable and better victim safety.