



Testimony for the Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety

Topic: LD 1592, HP 1181

Submitted by Lucy Bloom, Executive Director, Veronica's Voice

May 12, 2021

Thank you Representative Lois Reckittof and members of the Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety. I deeply respect your courage in pursuing justice, the protection of the human rights of the most marginalized in our communities, and protection of society from the public health crisis stemming from unaddressed demand for commercial sex acts.

I am Lucy Bloom, Executive Director of Veronica's Voice, the voice of the sexually exploited.

The Palermo Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish trafficking in persons, especially women and children, was adopted by the United Nations in 2000 to supplement the 2000 Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime. At that time, human trafficking was the third largest crime, behind drugs and guns. This crime has now grown to be the 2nd largest crime (and is estimated that it will surpass drugs by 2023 if we do not get ahead of its spread). Due to cultural and legal differences around the world, and due to the great need for a coordinated effort to combat this heinous crime, the United National Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights provided recommended principles and guidelines on Human Rights and Human Trafficking.

These include recognition of demand for commercial sex acts as a root cause of the crime, and provides criminal relief and services for victims to give them opportunities to thrive.

The recommended changes accomplish this human rights approach and leads the way for other states to follow.

Language matters. Creating the crime of commercial sexual exploitation provides an accurate description of this crime and recognizes that commercial sex is exploitation/is not victimless.

Maine is fortunate to have Tricia Grant and Sophia's House to help lead the way in design of a pilot program to provide increased comprehensive services to survivors of commercial sexual exploitation and victims of human trafficking.

In a purchase, numerous human rights and the dignity of the person being purchased to perform the sex act violated. In an effort to support the human rights and dignity of survivors, to get at the root of the crime by addressing demand, and to streamline law making it easier to coordinate enforcement, Veronica's Voice supports LD 1592 - An Act To Decriminalize Engaging in Prostitution, Strengthen the Laws against Commercial Sexual Exploitation and Allow a Person Convicted of Engaging in Prostitution To Petition the Court To Expunge the Record of Conviction.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Lucy Bloom
Veronica's Voice

Testimony for the Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety
Topic: LD 1592, HP 1181
Submitted by Lucy Bloom, Executive Director, Veronica's Voice
May 12, 2021

Thank you Representative Lois Reckittof and members of the Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety. I deeply respect your courage in pursuing justice, the protection of the human rights of the most marginalized in our communities, and protection of society from the public health crisis stemming from unaddressed demand for commercial sex acts.

I am Lucy Bloom, Executive Director of Veronica's Voice, the voice of the sexually exploited.

The Palermo Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish trafficking in persons, especially women and children, was adopted by the United Nations in 2000 to supplement the 2000 Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime. At that time, human trafficking was the third largest crime, behind drugs and guns. This crime has now grown to be the 2nd largest crime (and is estimated that it will surpass drugs by 2023 if we do not get ahead of its spread). Due to cultural and legal differences around the world, and due to the great need for a coordinated effort to combat this heinous crime, the United National Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights provided recommended principles and guidelines on Human Rights and Human Trafficking.

These include recognition of demand for commercial sex acts as a root cause of the crime, and provides criminal relief and services for victims to give them opportunities to thrive.

The recommended changes accomplish this human rights approach and leads the way for other states to follow.

Language matters. Creating the crime of commercial sexual exploitation provides an accurate description of this crime and recognizes that commercial sex is exploitation/is not victimless.

Maine is fortunate to have Tricia Grant and Sophia's House to help lead the way in design of a pilot program to provide increased comprehensive services to survivors of commercial sexual exploitation and victims of human trafficking.

In a purchase, numerous human rights and the dignity of the person being purchased to perform the sex act violated. In an effort to support the human rights and dignity of survivors, to get at the root of the crime by addressing demand, and to streamline law making it easier to coordinate enforcement, Veronica's Voice supports LD 1592 - An Act To Decriminalize Engaging in Prostitution, Strengthen the Laws against Commercial Sexual Exploitation and Allow a Person Convicted of Engaging in Prostitution To Petition the Court To Expunge the Record of Conviction.

Thank you for your time and consideration.