



PO Box 1406  
Wall Street Station  
New York, NY 10268-1406  
Tel. 212.349.6009 Fax 212.349.6810  
[www.sanctuaryforfamilies.org](http://www.sanctuaryforfamilies.org)

**Testimony of Cristian Eduardo  
In support of LD1592**

**May 12, 2021**

My name is Cristian Eduardo. I am a survivor of international and domestic sex trafficking, a member of the LGBTQ community, a Mexican immigrant, and HIV positive. I appreciate the opportunity to submit my analysis in support of LD1592. **Today I am here because, as a survivor leader, I think it is time to listen to survivors; it is time to believe in survivors.** Prostitution is a system that fosters exploitation, and it is time of think about solutions.

I want to acknowledge my privilege as a cisgender male, which enables me to stand here to talk to you today. I'm thinking of the people who are not in this room today, whose voices are not being heard—for all those in prostitution who are hopeless and without any choice but to survive. Those are the lives that I am worried about the reason that I am an advocate.

**It's not easy to be a survivor of trafficking.** Trafficking is about sexual harassment, about rape, and about denial of your identity as a human being. As a member of the LGBTQ community, as a person of color, as a non-native English speaker, as an immigrant, I know this bill won't actually make things better or safer. There is a common denominator for trafficking survivors like me who don't just have a single identity: vulnerabilities.

LD1592 acknowledges the harms that are perpetrated by those who purchase sex by changing the name of the sex buyer law to commercial sexual exploitation. We cannot normalize people preying on those vulnerabilities. We cannot normalize the harm that is being inflicted when buyers purchase human bodies. I can tell you how this has impacted someone like me.

**Buyers in prostitution don't care about us,** the "things" they are buying and using. When somebody is buying you for sex, they are not concerned about condoms, if you contract HIV, or



PO Box 1406  
Wall Street Station  
New York, NY 10268-1406  
Tel. 212.349.6009 Fax 212.349.6810  
[www.sanctuaryforfamilies.org](http://www.sanctuaryforfamilies.org)

if you die during the process. The only goal for them is pleasure.

LD1592 is a solution to the problem of prostitution. It is important to understand that prostitution is a form of violence and those exploited within prostitution do not need arrest - they need support such as housing, medical and clinical services, and support to be able to exit the sex trade. For this reason, Sanctuary for Families and I support partial decriminalization, or the Equality Model, that decriminalizes people in prostitution, but does not let buyers and pimps off the hook for the harm they are causing. Through this model, we can make sure that those in prostitution are not being prosecuted or punished and that they have access to critical services including physical and mental health care, housing, education, and economic empowerment solutions, that will benefit both their safety and their health.

Not everybody in the sex trade is there by choice. As a survivor, I call on the committee members to think about the vulnerable communities—people of color, immigrants, LGBTQ folks, youth—who will be supported by this legislation. **Please vote in support of LD1592.**

Thank you.