

Good Morning Senator Deschambault and Representative Warren and Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice of Public Safety

My name is Tierra Ross. I live in Portland Maine with my 10-year-old son. I am a local business salon owner. I am survivor of sex trafficking for over 13 years. My son was in foster care due to my victimization in prostitution. And I'm a Last Girl.

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 Records of Conviction, and for the most part it is a good bill and I support all but the Decriminalizing of Engaging in Prostitution I do not support.

I do agree that sex buyers and sex traffickers are the biggest predators to victims and should receive higher penalties for taking advantage of individuals. I also agree that victims of prostitution should not get their children taken away but instead receive support and resources. We need our communities to thrive, and families to live successfully.

From being a victim of prostitution, I am opposing Decriminalization in LD 1592. Pimps are so manipulative and they know how to blend in and stay out the way. For over a decade, my pimps usually send me away to different states all the time to make money, and every morning, I had a daily quota to send back to them via Visa cards or green dot cards, which are untraceable. I am afraid if decriminalization in engaging in prostitution becomes legal more victimization will happen in our communities. In Maine, there is already a lack of resources, and the resources do not trickle down to the last girl, black, brown, indigenous, young girls, women and trans, who are the most victimized and exploited people statistically, globally, nationally and even here in this very white state of Maine. Where will we get more resources from? Decriminalization comes from a very privileged place and it leaves out the last girl only victimizing her even more.

Therefore, adding Bill LD 1455 the Support of Survivors of Sex Trafficking and Exploitation. This amendment will support survivors and there will be an opportunity through the courts to see, evaluate, and help if there is any abuse or needs or resources for individuals engaging prostitution. Decriminalization will bring only more prostitution, victimization, abuse, and trafficking. Please do not decriminalize in engaging in prostitution in the state of Maine it would only cause more harm.

Thank You.

Tierra Ross
Portland

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