

Lynn Tillotson
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LD 1871

Public Statement from Visit Portland in Support of L.D. 1871

As the CEO of Visit Portland, I am reaching out to voice my strong support for L.D. 1871, “An Act to Permit Sealing Criminal History Record Information of Victims of Sex Trafficking or Sexual Exploitation.”

This bill represents not only justice for survivors but also a practical solution that will benefit our economy and workforce. By recognizing the unique circumstances faced by survivors of sex trafficking and exploitation and allowing for the sealing of certain criminal records, we are creating pathways for these individuals to reclaim their lives and contribute meaningfully to our communities.

As the leader of an organization engaged with Maine’s tourism and hospitality sectors, I see the opportunity for L.D. 1871 to be instrumental in addressing workforce issues. Criminal records tied to victimization in sex trafficking and exploitation often create insurmountable barriers to employment. By allowing survivors to have these records sealed, L.D. 1871 provides a clean slate—one that is crucial for obtaining jobs, training, and housing. This is especially important in industries like hospitality and retail, where background checks are often a standard part of the hiring process.

Maine’s workforce challenges are well-documented, and the tourism industry is no exception. We need motivated, skilled individuals to help fill these gaps. Survivors of trafficking often possess resilience, adaptability, and a strong work ethic—qualities that make them valuable contributors to the workforce. Removing the stigma of a criminal record ensures that they have access to opportunities where they can thrive.

Employment is one of the most effective ways to help survivors achieve long-term stability. By sealing criminal records, L.D. 1871 would enable individuals to secure jobs that allow them to support themselves and their families, reducing reliance on social services and contributing to Maine’s economy.

The tourism industry is one of the largest economic drivers in this state, and it thrives on the talents and dedication of its workforce. When we support survivors of trafficking through policies like L.D. 1871, we are actively investing in our shared future. By removing barriers to employment, we are not only helping these individuals rebuild their lives but also ensuring that Maine’s industries, including tourism, benefit from their contributions.

In closing, I urge you to support L.D. 1871. This legislation is a practical and compassionate solution to a pressing issue. It will help countless Mainers rebuild their lives, strengthen our workforce, and enhance our communities.

Sincerely,
Lynn Tillotson
President & CEO, Visit Portland