



January 8, 2026

Maine State House
2 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333

Testimony in Support of LD 1911

Dear Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on the Judiciary,

World Without Exploitation (WorldWE) is the country's largest national anti-trafficking coalition with over 175 non-governmental organization (NGO) members. We unite communities across the country to advocate for policies that result in permanent solutions to combat human trafficking, sexual exploitation, and their underlying causes. We also work directly with and on behalf of hundreds of survivors across the country. Many of these survivors have experienced criminalization because of their trafficking.

Survivors of human trafficking are often criminalized for situations stemming from their trafficking experiences. Having a criminal record, or even an arrest record without a conviction, can make it harder or virtually impossible for survivors to secure jobs, rent apartments, and move on with their lives after their exploitation. These convictions often stem from crimes such as theft, drug-related offenses, financial crimes, and other illegal acts that victims are compelled to commit during their trafficking, crimes from which they derive no financial benefit.

For the vast majority of survivors, their criminal records are directly related to their trafficking. A National Survivor Study by the Polaris Project found that a majority of survivors' criminal records created barriers to securing gainful employment, safe housing, continuing their education, and receiving child custody.¹

No survivor should be victimized for their own exploitation. Our laws must be survivor-informed, providing them meaningful support to receive justice, healing, and the opportunity to rebuild their lives without being permanently punished for crimes they were coerced into committing. LD 1436, passed by Maine in 2023, established a process for survivors of commercial sexual exploitation to petition to seal criminal history records. Permitting this process to apply automatically by passing LD 1911 will further achieve this policy goal. Enacting strong, expansive legislation to seal criminal history records will reduce the expansive collateral consequences that impede survivors of human trafficking's ability to live their fullest lives.

Thank you for your support, and I appreciate your time.

Bella Peracchi.
Policy Associate, World Without Exploitation