

To the Honorable All Those Reading:

As a labor rights advocate, human rights advocate, degreed sociologist, and a current/former sex worker, LD2168 frightens me about the 'help' it is attempting to create more than it soothes my worries about ceasing exploitation.

I fully stand with survivors of labor exploitation, of sex trafficking, of CSA* and CSAM*; and I fully stand with sex workers and an adult's right to safe and consensual intimacy. While I have the freedom to work and volunteer alongside many sex worker and survivor led organizations, I testify today as my own person who frequents Maine, with loved ones living in the state (longer than I have).

An issue arises when we try to group these *very different experiences* under one single solution. The language of this bill attempts to blend [adult consensual commercial sex acts] (also known as prostitution) *with* [commercial sexual exploitation] by claiming them both liable to the same higher fines and assessment.

I have been under the impression that the distinguished state of Maine passed legislation only a couple years ago allowing the consensual sale of commercial sex among adults, yet LD2168 continues to pass judgement on those engaging... This state-sanctioned judgement could cause someone to feel shame surrounding their situation and persuade them *against* reporting violent activity they are witnessing or experiencing while working, thus having an adverse effect on what this bill is attempting to do: create more funds for the Victims' Compensation Fund. Diving even further into this line of thought, historically where law enforcement spend resources focusing on 'stopping prostitution', it is poor men of color who are arrested. I do not think that is the place to focus if we are looking for excess funds to donate into our community.

But that's the old way of thinking, and Maine has the incredible opportunity to move slowly in new waters of regulating commercial sex acts. It is too soon to begin tweaking the systems in place, when word of legalities move slowly through communities.

LD2168 must be amended to exclude higher fines on those engaging in consensual adult commercial sexual activity, and keep focused on separating [violent exploitation and the exploitation of children] from [adults attempting to seek safe and consensual intimacy with gratitude]. Until then, unfortunately, I must oppose what I hope is caring legislation.

* child sexual abuse and child sexual abuse material