

New Hampshire: End the Criminalization of Child Sex Trafficking Survivors

PRESS RELEASE June 7, 2019:

Today, we are calling on the Governor of New Hampshire, Chris Sununu, to sign into law a bill, championed by Representative Linda Massimilla, that will set an important national precedent in ending the criminalization of child sex trafficking victims.

Together, in partnership with [Shared Hope International](#) and [Care2](#), we are delivering 37,585 petition signatures to the Governor's office from [our campaign calling on New Hampshire to pass House Bill 189](#).

Crucially, by passing House Bill 189 **New Hampshire will set an important national precedent for exempting child sex trafficking victims from criminal penalties for crimes they committed as a direct result of their victimization.** The bill recently passed out of both chambers of the state legislature, so it is now up to Governor Sununu to show that he stands with child survivors of sex trafficking.

“It is outrageous that child survivors of trafficking are being treated as criminals, punished for crimes their traffickers forced them to commit,” said Joanna Ewart-James, Executive Director of Freedom United. “Criminal records follow these children for the rest of their lives, presenting major barriers to their full recovery and rehabilitation as a survivor.”

New Hampshire is already on the right track — it is one of 29 states that currently have legislation stating that child sex trafficking victims cannot be charged for prostitution. House Bill 189 would extend protections for survivors of child sex trafficking to prevent them from being charged for “any other misdemeanor or non-violent class B felony, where the conduct was committed as a direct result of being trafficked.”

“We are thrilled to see New Hampshire move the needle and set a strong example of what meaningful protections look like for child survivors of sex trafficking,” said former U.S. Congresswoman Linda Smith, Founder and President of Shared Hope International, an organization that provided technical assistance on the bill. “Directing exploited youth away from punitive systems and towards services and protections is a critical first step in improving the trajectory of a child survivor’s life.”

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Notes to Editors:

1. Freedom United is the world's largest community dedicated to ending human trafficking and modern slavery. We equip people around the globe with awareness, which we then mobilize into millions of valuable actions to drive real change necessary for a world in which slavery no longer thrives.
2. Freedom United has partnered with 85 organizations globally to effectively and collaboratively drive progress.
3. For more information, visit <https://www.freedomunited.org/>