



NEWS RELEASE
March 31, 2017

Contact: Brian Walch
202-376-8371
publicaffairs@usccr.gov

**Maine Advisory Committee to the U. S. Commission on Civil Rights Releases Report:
*Human Trafficking in Maine***

The Maine Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights has released its report *Human Trafficking in Maine*, which discusses the state's efforts to combat human trafficking. The Committee held two public briefings, hearing from law enforcement officials, prosecutors, legislators, advocates, and survivors of trafficking.

The first briefing revealed that Maine did not have a stand-alone human trafficking law. Committee members asked the panelists why the state did not have such legislation and encouraged legislative action to help remedy human trafficking in Maine. The legislature subsequently enacted a human trafficking law aimed at protecting victims and increasing penalties for violators.

At its second briefing, the Committee learned that two new laws are needed. First, the state should enact a vacatur law to allow courts to remove criminal convictions for survivors of trafficking. Second, the state should also enact a safe harbor law so that minors are not charged with crimes committed when they were trafficked.

Finally, the Committee calls on the state to provide adequate services for survivors of trafficking. The Committee learned that victim assistance services, including housing, education, employment services, and health care, are critical and possibly the most important tool in the fight against human trafficking.

Committee Chair Diane A. Khiel said, "Human trafficking is a form of modern day slavery and is a hidden problem in Maine that must not be ignored. The Committee encourages the state to accept all of its recommendations and to provide adequate services to survivors of trafficking. These services must receive sufficient funding to serve the growing number of individuals in Maine identified as survivors of both sex and labor trafficking."

The report can be viewed at: <http://www.usccr.gov/pubs/Human-Trafficking-in-Maine.pdf>

#####

The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights is an independent, bipartisan agency charged with studying and advising the President and Congress on civil rights matters and issuing an annual federal civil rights enforcement report. Advisory Committees to the Commission conduct reviews and produce reports and recommendations concerning state and local civil rights issues. Appointees to the Committees serve four-year terms and are unremunerated. For information about the Commission and Advisory Committees, visit <http://www.usccr.gov> and follow us on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/USCCRGov/> and Twitter <https://twitter.com/usccrgov>