



April 8, 2026

The Honorable Carol Hagan McEntee
Chair, House Committee on Judiciary
Rhode Island State House
Providence, RI 02903

Re: Written Testimony to Support 2026 – H7201

Chair McEntee and Members of the House Judiciary Committee:

My name is Michelle Loranger, and I submit this written testimony as the Executive Director of Day One in strong support of H7201, An Act Relating to Criminal Offenses – Commercial Sexual Activity.

Day One is honored to serve as Rhode Island's Sexual Assault Coalition and the Rhode Island Children's Network, the state chapter of Children's Advocacy Centers (CACs). For more than 53 years, Day One has provided a wide range of direct services to survivors of sexual violence and human trafficking of all ages. Through this work, we witness the profound harm caused by exploitation and the enduring damage it inflicts on survivors' self-image, personal safety, and overall stability.

H7201 addresses a critical gap in Rhode Island's current legal framework by directly confronting demand for commercial sexual exploitation. Human trafficking and the sex trade do not exist without buyers. By holding buyers accountable through a structured educational program, H7201 targets a root cause of exploitation rather than further penalizing individuals who are disproportionately impacted by coercion, violence, and trauma.

Evidence from across the United States demonstrates that buyer accountability and education programs reduce recidivism, increase understanding of the harms caused by purchasing sex, and serve as an effective deterrent. Nearly 100 such programs operate nationwide, many funded entirely through buyer fees rather than taxpayer dollars. Many also generate funding for survivor services, creating a model that couples accountability with tangible support.

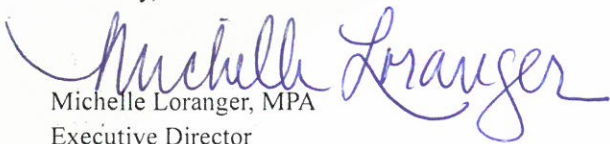
H7201 is both fiscally responsible and survivor-centered. The instructional program established under this bill is funded through fines imposed on buyers, making it cost-neutral to the public while reinforcing the principle that accountability should rest with those causing harm. The curriculum focuses on the realities of trafficking, the physical and psychological impacts on individuals in the sex trade, and the broader consequences for families and communities.

By passing H7201, Rhode Island would join other states that have implemented evidence-based demand reduction strategies shown to change behavior, enhance public safety, and reduce trafficking activity. Commercial sexual exploitation is not a victimless crime—it is closely linked to violence, substance use, and long-term trauma.

H7201 sends a clear message that buying sex carries real consequences and affirms Rhode Island's commitment to prevention, accountability, and survivor dignity. For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to support passage of H7201.

Thank you for your time, your commitment to survivors, and your leadership on these critical issues.

Sincerely,


Michelle Loranger, MPA
Executive Director