

To The Criminal Justice Committee,

I hope this testimony finds you well. My name is Cassie Malin, and I am writing to you as a survivor of human trafficking. For the past seven years, I have been striving to rebuild my life, staying clean and sober, and pursuing an Associate's Degree in Computer Programming and Software Development. Despite my dedication and hard work, I find myself facing significant barriers due to my past.

One of the most pressing issues I face is the presence of a criminal record stemming from my time as a victim of trafficking. This record has become a formidable obstacle in my quest for stable and long term, employment. Despite my qualifications and aspirations, my opportunities are severely limited because many employers are unwilling to consider someone with a criminal history. As a result, I find myself working multiple part-time jobs and freelancing just to make ends meet.

Despite these challenges, I remain determined to pursue my passion in cybersecurity to contribute the fight against human trafficking. However, achieving this dream hinges on the expungement of my criminal record. Without a clean slate, I am unable to access the opportunities necessary to pursue my chosen career path.

Additionally, I am currently embroiled in a custody battle for my children, whom I have not seen for over a year and a half. Despite legal orders, my family has chosen to disregard my past trauma and prevent me from having the contact with my children that I am entitled to. This further compounds the injustices I have faced and underscores the urgent need for reform.

House Bill 385 presents a crucial opportunity to address these injustices and provide hope for survivors like myself. By making expungement accessible to all trafficking survivors, regardless of the circumstances or location of their trafficking experience, this bill has the potential to positively impact countless lives. Expungement would not only remove the barriers to employment and education that I face but also restore a sense of dignity and hope for a better future.

Thank you for taking the time to hear my story and understand why this issue is so important. I urge you to support House Bill 385 and stand with survivors in their journey towards healing and empowerment. Together, we can ensure that every survivor has the opportunity to reclaim their lives and pursue their dreams.

Sincerely,

Cassie Malin