

I am a survivor of pimp based sex trafficking. My experience with exploitation began at 18 years old. I was struggling with PTSD and addiction when I first met my pimp. He offered me, what I thought was a way out. By the time I realized what the true nature of our relationship was I felt trapped. They used threats of violence, manipulation, and coercion to keep me and other women trapped in the life of prostitution. In 2002 at the age of 21 I was finally able to make my escape. For me, leaving was the scariest part. My pimp had my Social Security number, my family's address, driver's license and other major identifying information. I thought for sure, no matter where I went, he could find me. My only recourse was to pray and hope that he couldn't and wouldn't try to. I lived in that fear for many years after leaving the life. Thankfully today 12 years later I don't consistently live in that fear.

For a lot of folks who have experienced human trafficking safety after leaving is the biggest concern. Many victims do not actually leave the abuse because they're afraid of what will happen if they are located by their exploiters.

Last night Healing Action had our weekly peer support group for survivors of sex trafficking and I had the opportunity to ask the ladies of that group what they thought of a program like Safe at Home. Would that have been useful for them? Before I even got my full question out the ladies responded with a resounding yes! I heard all of them say that having the option to have a confidential address would have made their escape less traumatic. Some stated that they could still use the service today.

I want to thank the Secretary of State and the bipartisan authors of this legislation for making survivors of human trafficking a priority.