

**Department of Legislative Services**  
Maryland General Assembly  
2014 Session

**FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE**

Senate Joint Resolution 7      (Senator Simonaire)  
Judicial Proceedings

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**Human Trafficking**

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This joint resolution requests the Maryland Human Trafficking Task Force to (1) perform a comprehensive study of the various approaches other states have implemented while decriminalizing the act of prostitution by minors caught in human trafficking as defined in federal law and providing a complementary restorative program to facilitate the successful reintroduction of those minors back into society and (2) provide a detailed recommendation of best possible approaches and programs based on the results of the study to the Governor, the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee, and the House Judiciary Committee by December 31, 2014.

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**Fiscal Summary**

**State Effect:** Compliance with this joint resolution can be handled with existing budgeted resources of the State agencies that participate in the task force.

**Local Effect:** None.

**Small Business Effect:** None.

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**Analysis**

**Current Law/Background:** According to the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), human sex trafficking is the most common form of modern-day slavery. Estimates place the number of its domestic and international victims in the millions, mostly females and children enslaved in the commercial sex industry for little or no money. The FBI regards human sex trafficking as the fastest-growing business of organized crime and the third-largest criminal enterprise in the world.

In 2000, Congress passed the Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA), which created the first comprehensive federal law to address trafficking, with a significant focus on the international dimension of the problem. The law provides a three-pronged approach: (1) prevention through public awareness programs overseas and a State Department-led monitoring and sanctions program; (2) protection through a new T Visa and services for foreign national victims; and (3) prosecution through new federal crimes and severe penalties. The federal Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons was established in October 2001. The enabling legislation led to the creation of a bureau within the State Department to specifically address human trafficking and exploitation on all levels and to take legal action against perpetrators. TVPA was designed to enforce all laws within the Thirteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution that apply.

The Maryland Human Trafficking Task Force was formed in 2007 as an umbrella organization of local, State and federal agencies, and private organizations. It is led by the U.S. Attorney's Office and coordinates activities, develops policy, and implements plans to combat human trafficking in Maryland. The task force maintains five active subcommittees: Law Enforcement, Victim Services, Training, Public Outreach, and Legislative.

The Maryland State Commission on Criminal Sentencing Policy reports that in fiscal 2013, there were two criminal convictions for misdemeanor human trafficking and one conviction for felony human trafficking in Maryland circuit courts.

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### **Additional Information**

**Prior Introductions:** None.

**Cross File:** None.

**Information Source(s):** Office of the Attorney General, Governor's Office of Crime Control and Prevention, Department of Human Resources, Department of Juvenile Services, Department of State Police, Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services, State's Attorneys' Association, Maryland State Commission on Criminal Sentencing Policy, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - February 19, 2014  
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