



BILL NO: House Bill 138
TITLE: Education - Sexual Abuse and Assault Awareness and Prevention Program
Human and Sex Trafficking
COMMITTEE: Ways and Means
HEARING DATE: February 3, 2021
POSITION: **SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS**

The Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence (MNADV) is the state domestic violence coalition that brings together victim service providers, allied professionals, and concerned individuals for the common purpose of reducing intimate partner and family violence and its harmful effects on our citizens. **MNADV urges the House Ways and Means Committee to issue a favorable report with amendments on HB 138.**

House Bill 138 would require the State Board of Education and certain nonpublic schools to develop and implement a program of age-appropriate education on the awareness and prevention of sexual abuse and assault that includes for 6th to 8th grade students. There are many intersections between human trafficking and domestic violence including the power and control dynamics found in both forms of violence. In 2019, the top recruitment tactic for trafficking was an “intimate partner/marriage proposition” according to the data reported by the National Human Trafficking Hotline.¹ MNADV fully supports the development and implementation of such a curriculum and would recommend that the education in our schools continue through the 12th grade.

MNADV believes that education and awareness is critical for the prevention of human trafficking. Research and best practices surrounding human trafficking is continuously evolving. Since human trafficking is such a specialized field, we believe that experts in the field of human trafficking and those with direct experience working with survivors of trafficking should be involved in the development of the curriculum. Further, since new research and best practices regarding human trafficking are continuously developed, the curriculum should be reviewed at regular intervals to ensure that it is reflective of the most recent knowledge of human trafficking. In 2019, Maryland passed a long overdue statute to criminalize labor trafficking in the state. We would further recommend that any curriculum address both sex trafficking and labor trafficking.

For the above stated reasons, the **Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence urges a favorable report with amendments on HB 138.**

¹ <https://humantraffickinghotline.org/sites/default/files/Polaris-2019-US-National-Human-Trafficking-Hotline-Data-Report.pdf>