

# SENATE BILL 768

D4, E2, E3

2lr1598  
CF HB 833

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By: **Senators Lee and Watson**

Introduced and read first time: February 7, 2022

Assigned to: Judicial Proceedings

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## A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Criminal Law – Victims of Child Sex Trafficking – Safe Harbor and Service**  
3 **Response**

4 FOR the purpose of altering procedures that a law enforcement officer and a court are  
5 required to follow when the law enforcement officer or a court has reason to believe  
6 that a child who has been detained is a victim of sex trafficking; providing that a  
7 minor may not be criminally prosecuted or proceeded against as a delinquent child  
8 for a certain crime or civil offense if the minor committed the crime or civil offense  
9 as a direct result of sex trafficking; providing that certain criminal prohibitions do  
10 not apply to minors; and generally relating to victims of child sex trafficking.

11 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,  
12 Article – Courts and Judicial Proceedings  
13 Section 3–8A–14  
14 Annotated Code of Maryland  
15 (2020 Replacement Volume and 2021 Supplement)

16 BY adding to  
17 Article – Courts and Judicial Proceedings  
18 Section 3–8A–17.13  
19 Annotated Code of Maryland  
20 (2020 Replacement Volume and 2021 Supplement)

21 BY adding to  
22 Article – Criminal Law  
23 Section 1–402  
24 Annotated Code of Maryland  
25 (2021 Replacement Volume and 2021 Supplement)

26 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,  
27 Article – Criminal Law

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EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



1 Section 11–303 and 11–306  
2 Annotated Code of Maryland  
3 (2021 Replacement Volume and 2021 Supplement)

4 BY repealing and reenacting, without amendments,  
5 Article – Family Law  
6 Section 5–701(a) and (x)  
7 Annotated Code of Maryland  
8 (2019 Replacement Volume and 2021 Supplement)

9 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,  
10 Article – Human Services  
11 Section 1–202  
12 Annotated Code of Maryland  
13 (2019 Replacement Volume and 2021 Supplement)

14 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,  
15 That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

16 **Article – Courts and Judicial Proceedings**

17 3–8A–14.

18 (a) A child may be taken into custody under this subtitle by any of the following  
19 methods:

20 (1) Pursuant to an order of the court;

21 (2) By a law enforcement officer pursuant to the law of arrest;

22 (3) By a law enforcement officer or other person authorized by the court if  
23 the officer or other person has reasonable grounds to believe that the child is in immediate  
24 danger from the child’s surroundings and that the child’s removal is necessary for the  
25 child’s protection;

26 (4) By a law enforcement officer or other person authorized by the court if  
27 the officer or other person has reasonable grounds to believe that the child has run away  
28 from the child’s parents, guardian, or legal custodian; or

29 (5) In accordance with § 3–8A–14.1 of this subtitle.

30 (b) If a law enforcement officer takes a child into custody, the officer shall  
31 immediately notify, or cause to be notified, the child’s parents, guardian, or custodian of  
32 the action. After making every reasonable effort to give notice, the law enforcement officer  
33 shall with all reasonable speed:

34 (1) Release the child to the child’s parents, guardian, or custodian or to any

1 other person designated by the court, upon their written promise to bring the child before  
2 the court when requested by the court, and such security for the child's appearance as the  
3 court may reasonably require, unless the child's placement in detention or shelter care is  
4 permitted and appears required by § 3-8A-15 of this subtitle; or

5 (2) Deliver the child to the court or a place of detention or shelter care  
6 designated by the court.

7 (c) If a parent, guardian, or custodian fails to bring the child before the court  
8 when requested, the court may issue a writ of attachment directing that the child be taken  
9 into custody and brought before the court. The court may proceed against the parent,  
10 guardian, or custodian for contempt.

11 (d) (1) (I) IN THIS SECTION THE FOLLOWING WORDS HAVE THE  
12 MEANINGS INDICATED.

13 (II) "QUALIFYING OFFENSE" HAS THE MEANING STATED IN §  
14 8-302 OF THE CRIMINAL PROCEDURE ARTICLE.

15 (III) "SEX TRAFFICKING" HAS THE MEANING STATED IN § 5-701  
16 OF THE FAMILY LAW ARTICLE.

17 (2) In addition to the requirements for reporting child abuse and neglect  
18 under § 5-704 of the Family Law Article, if a law enforcement officer has reason to believe  
19 that a child who has been detained is a victim of sex trafficking[, as defined in § 5-701 of  
20 the Family Law Article], the law enforcement officer shall [notify any], AS SOON AS  
21 PRACTICABLE:

22 (I) NOTIFY AN appropriate regional navigator, as defined in §  
23 5-704.4 of the Family Law Article, for the jurisdiction where the child was taken into  
24 custody or where the child is a resident that the child is a suspected victim of sex trafficking  
25 SO THE REGIONAL NAVIGATOR CAN COORDINATE A SERVICE RESPONSE;

26 (II) REPORT TO THE LOCAL CHILD WELFARE AGENCY THAT THE  
27 CHILD IS A SUSPECTED VICTIM OF SEX TRAFFICKING; AND

28 (III) RELEASE THE CHILD TO THE CHILD'S PARENTS, GUARDIAN,  
29 OR CUSTODIAN IF IT IS SAFE AND APPROPRIATE TO DO SO, OR TO THE LOCAL CHILD  
30 WELFARE AGENCY IF THERE IS REASON TO BELIEVE THAT THE CHILD'S SAFETY WILL  
31 BE AT RISK IF THE CHILD IS RETURNED TO THE CHILD'S PARENTS, GUARDIAN, OR  
32 CUSTODIAN.

33 (3) A LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICER WHO TAKES A CHILD WHO IS A  
34 SUSPECTED VICTIM OF SEX TRAFFICKING INTO CUSTODY UNDER SUBSECTION (A)(3)  
35 OF THIS SECTION MAY NOT DETAIN THE CHILD IN A JUVENILE DETENTION FACILITY,

1 AS DEFINED UNDER § 9-237 OF THE HUMAN SERVICES ARTICLE, IF THE REASON  
2 FOR DETAINING THE CHILD IS A SUSPECTED VIOLATION OF A QUALIFYING OFFENSE  
3 OR AN OFFENSE UNDER TITLE 3, SUBTITLE 11 OF THE CRIMINAL LAW ARTICLE.

4 3-8A-17.13.

5 (A) (1) IN THIS SECTION THE FOLLOWING WORDS HAVE THE MEANINGS  
6 INDICATED.

7 (2) "REGIONAL NAVIGATOR" HAS THE MEANING STATED IN § 5-704.4  
8 OF THE FAMILY LAW ARTICLE.

9 (3) "SEX TRAFFICKING" HAS THE MEANING STATED IN § 5-701 OF THE  
10 FAMILY LAW ARTICLE.

11 (B) (1) AT ANY TIME AFTER A PETITION ALLEGING THAT A CHILD HAS  
12 COMMITTED A DELINQUENT ACT IS FILED WITH THE COURT UNDER THIS SUBTITLE,  
13 THE COURT ON ITS OWN MOTION, OR ON MOTION OF THE CHILD'S COUNSEL OR THE  
14 STATE'S ATTORNEY, SHALL STAY ALL PROCEEDINGS AND ORDER THAT THE  
15 REGIONAL NAVIGATOR FOR THE RELEVANT JURISDICTION CONDUCT AN  
16 EVALUATION OF THE CHILD'S STATUS AS A VICTIM OF SEX TRAFFICKING, IF THE  
17 COURT FINDS THAT:

18 (I) THERE IS PROBABLE CAUSE TO BELIEVE THAT THE CHILD  
19 HAS COMMITTED THE DELINQUENT ACT; AND

20 (II) THERE IS REASON TO BELIEVE THAT THE CHILD  
21 COMMITTED THE ACT AS A DIRECT RESULT OF SEX TRAFFICKING.

22 (2) IF THE REGIONAL NAVIGATOR FINDS THAT THE CHILD IS A VICTIM  
23 OF SEX TRAFFICKING, AND IF THE COURT FINDS THAT THE CHILD COMMITTED THE  
24 VIOLATION AS A DIRECT RESULT OF, OR INCIDENTAL OR RELATED TO, SEX  
25 TRAFFICKING, THE COURT SHALL DISMISS THE CASE AND TRANSFER THE CASE TO  
26 THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES.

27 Article - Criminal Law

28 1-402.

29 (A) (1) IN THIS SECTION THE FOLLOWING WORDS HAVE THE MEANINGS  
30 INDICATED.

31 (2) "QUALIFYING OFFENSE" HAS THE MEANING STATED IN §  
32 8-302 OF THE CRIMINAL PROCEDURE ARTICLE.

1           **(3) “SEX TRAFFICKING” HAS THE MEANING STATED IN § 5-701 OF THE**  
2 **FAMILY LAW ARTICLE.**

3           **(B) A MINOR MAY NOT BE CRIMINALLY PROSECUTED OR PROCEEDED**  
4 **AGAINST AS A DELINQUENT CHILD UNDER TITLE 3, SUBTITLE 8A OF THE COURTS**  
5 **ARTICLE FOR A QUALIFYING OFFENSE OR AN OFFENSE UNDER TITLE 3, SUBTITLE**  
6 **11 OF THIS ARTICLE IF THE MINOR COMMITTED THE UNDERLYING ACT AS A DIRECT**  
7 **RESULT OF SEX TRAFFICKING.**

8 11-303.

9           (a) [A person] **AN ADULT** may not knowingly:

10           (1) engage in prostitution or assignation by any means; or

11           (2) occupy a building, structure, or conveyance for prostitution or  
12 assignation.

13           (b) A person who violates this section is guilty of a misdemeanor and on conviction  
14 is subject to imprisonment not exceeding 1 year or a fine not exceeding \$500 or both.

15           (c) (1) Subject to paragraph (2) of this subsection, in a prosecution under this  
16 section, it is an affirmative defense of duress if the defendant committed the act as a result  
17 of being a victim of an act of another in violation of Title 3, Subtitle 11 of this article or the  
18 prohibition against human trafficking under federal law.

19           (2) A defendant may not assert the affirmative defense provided in  
20 paragraph (1) of this subsection unless the defendant notifies the State’s Attorney of the  
21 defendant’s intention to assert the defense at least 10 days prior to trial.

22           **(D) A LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICER WHO ENCOUNTERS A MINOR**  
23 **SUSPECTED OF OR KNOWN TO HAVE ENGAGED IN CONDUCT THAT AN ADULT IS**  
24 **PROHIBITED FROM ENGAGING IN UNDER THIS SECTION MAY TAKE THE MINOR INTO**  
25 **CUSTODY IN ACCORDANCE WITH § 3-8A-14 OF THE COURTS ARTICLE.**

26 11-306.

27           (a) [A person] **AN ADULT** may not knowingly procure or solicit or offer to procure  
28 or solicit prostitution or assignation.

29           (b) A person who violates this section is guilty of a misdemeanor and on conviction  
30 is subject to imprisonment not exceeding 1 year or a fine not exceeding \$500 or both.

31           (c) (1) Subject to paragraph (2) of this subsection, in a prosecution under this  
32 section, it is an affirmative defense of duress if the defendant committed the act as a result

1 of being a victim of an act of another in violation of Title 3, Subtitle 11 of this article or the  
2 prohibition against human trafficking under federal law.

3 (2) A defendant may not assert the affirmative defense provided in  
4 paragraph (1) of this subsection unless the defendant notifies the State's Attorney of the  
5 defendant's intention to assert the defense at least 10 days prior to trial.

6 **(D) A LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICER WHO ENCOUNTERS A MINOR**  
7 **SUSPECTED OF OR KNOWN TO HAVE ENGAGED IN CONDUCT THAT AN ADULT IS**  
8 **PROHIBITED FROM ENGAGING IN UNDER THIS SECTION MAY TAKE THE MINOR INTO**  
9 **CUSTODY IN ACCORDANCE WITH § 3-8A-14 OF THE COURTS ARTICLE.**

10 **Article – Family Law**

11 5-701.

12 (a) Except as otherwise provided in § 5-705.1 of this subtitle, in this subtitle the  
13 following words have the meanings indicated.

14 (x) “Sex trafficking” means the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision,  
15 obtaining, patronizing, or soliciting of a child for the purpose of a commercial sex act.

16 **Article – Human Services**

17 1-202.

18 **(A) IN THIS SECTION, “SEX TRAFFICKING” HAS THE MEANING STATED IN §**  
19 **5-701 OF THE FAMILY LAW ARTICLE.**

20 **[(a)] (B)** Except as otherwise provided in Title 5, Subtitles 7 and 12 of the Family  
21 Law Article, § 1-203 of this subtitle, and this section, a person may not disclose a report or  
22 record concerning child abuse **[or], neglect, OR SEX TRAFFICKING.**

23 **[(b)] (C)** A report or record concerning child abuse **[or], neglect, OR SEX**  
24 **TRAFFICKING** shall be disclosed:

25 (1) under a court order;

26 (2) under an order of an administrative law judge, if:

27 (i) the request for disclosure concerns a case pending before the  
28 Office of Administrative Hearings; and

29 (ii) provisions are made to comply with other State or federal  
30 confidentiality laws and to protect the identity of the reporter or other person whose life or  
31 safety is likely to be endangered by the disclosure; or

1 (3) to the Division of Parole and Probation in the Department of Public  
2 Safety and Correctional Services if, as a result of a report or investigation of suspected child  
3 abuse [or], neglect, **OR SEX TRAFFICKING**, the local department of social services has  
4 reason to believe that an individual who lives in or has a regular presence in a child's home  
5 is registered under Title 11, Subtitle 7 of the Criminal Procedure Article based on the  
6 commission of an offense against a child.

7 [(c)] (D) A report or record concerning child abuse or neglect:

8 (1) may be disclosed on request to:

9 (i) personnel of the Social Services Administration or a local  
10 department of social services, law enforcement personnel, and members of  
11 multidisciplinary case consultation teams, including an addiction specialist as defined in  
12 Title 5, Subtitle 12 of the Family Law Article or § 5–314 of this article, who are investigating  
13 a report of known or suspected child abuse or neglect or providing services to or assessing  
14 a child or family that is the subject of the report;

15 (ii) local or State officials responsible for the administration of child  
16 protective services, juvenile services, or child care, foster care, or adoption licensing,  
17 approval, or regulations, as necessary to carry out their official functions;

18 (iii) the State Council on Child Abuse and Neglect or its designee, the  
19 State Citizens Review Board for Children or its designee, or a child fatality review team,  
20 as necessary to carry out their official functions;

21 (iv) a person who is the alleged abuser or neglector, if that person is  
22 responsible for the child's welfare and provisions are made for the protection of the identity  
23 of the reporter or any other person whose life or safety is likely to be endangered by  
24 disclosing the information;

25 (v) a licensed practitioner who, or an agency, institution, or program  
26 that, is providing treatment or care to a child who is the subject of a report of child abuse  
27 or neglect for a purpose relevant to the treatment or care;

28 (vi) a parent or other person who has permanent or temporary care  
29 and custody of the child, if provisions are made for the protection of the identity of the  
30 reporter or any other person whose life or safety is likely to be endangered by disclosing the  
31 information;

32 (vii) 1. The appropriate public school superintendent or the  
33 principal or equivalent employee of a nonpublic school that holds a certificate of approval  
34 from the State or is registered with the State Department of Education to carry out  
35 appropriate personnel or administrative actions following a report of suspected child abuse  
36 involving a student committed by:

- 1                   A.     a public school employee in that school system;
- 2                   B.     an employee of that nonpublic school;
- 3                   C.     an independent contractor who supervises or works  
4 directly with students in that school system or that nonpublic school; or
- 5                   D.     an employee of an independent contractor, including a bus  
6 driver or bus assistant, who supervises or works directly with students in that school  
7 system or that nonpublic school; and

8                   2.     if the report concerns suspected child abuse involving a  
9 student committed by an employee, independent contractor, or employee of an independent  
10 contractor described in item 1 of this item and employed by a nonpublic school under the  
11 jurisdiction of the superintendent of schools for the Archdiocese of Baltimore, the  
12 Archdiocese of Washington, or the Catholic Diocese of Wilmington, the appropriate  
13 superintendent of schools;

14                   (viii) the director of a licensed child care facility or licensed child  
15 placement agency to carry out appropriate personnel actions following a report of suspected  
16 child abuse or neglect alleged to have been committed by an employee of the facility or  
17 agency and involving a child who is currently or was previously under the care of that  
18 facility or agency;

19                   (ix) the Juvenile Justice Monitoring Unit of the Office of the Attorney  
20 General established under Title 6, Subtitle 4 of the State Government Article;

21                   (x) subject to subsection [(d)] **(E)** of this section, a licensed  
22 practitioner of a hospital or birthing center to make discharge decisions concerning a child,  
23 when the practitioner suspects that the child may be in danger after discharge based on  
24 the practitioner's observation of the behavior of the child's parents or immediate family  
25 members; or

26                   (xi) the president of a Maryland public institution of higher  
27 education, as defined in § 10–101 of the Education Article, or the Chancellor of the  
28 University System of Maryland, to carry out appropriate personnel or administrative  
29 actions following a report of child abuse committed:

30                   1.     by an employee of the institution who has on–campus  
31 contact with children; or

32                   2.     by a contractor, an employee of a contractor, or a volunteer  
33 of the institution who has on–campus contact with children; and

34                   (2) may be disclosed by the Department of Human Services to the operator  
35 of a child care center that is required to be licensed or to hold a letter of compliance under  
36 Title 5, Subtitle 5, Part VII of the Family Law Article or to a family child care provider who



1 is required to be registered under Title 5, Subtitle 5, Part V of the Family Law Article, to  
2 determine the suitability of an individual for employment in the child care center or family  
3 child care home.

4 **[(d)] (E)** Only the following information concerning child abuse and neglect may  
5 be disclosed to a practitioner of a hospital or birthing center under subsection **[(c)(1)(x)]**  
6 **(D)(1)(X)** of this section:

7 (1) whether there is a prior finding of indicated child abuse or neglect by  
8 either parent; and

9 (2) whether there is an open investigation of child abuse or neglect pending  
10 against either parent.

11 **[(e)] (F)** A person who violates this section is guilty of a misdemeanor and on  
12 conviction is subject to imprisonment not exceeding 90 days or a fine not exceeding \$500 or  
13 both.

14 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect  
15 October 1, 2022.