

HOUSE BILL 1348

E2, D4

6lr2330

By: **Delegate Embry**

Introduced and read first time: February 12, 2026

Assigned to: Judiciary

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Human Trafficking – Reports to Regional Navigators and Prosecutions –**
3 **Authorization**

4 FOR the purpose of authorizing a certain person required to report suspected abuse to
5 report suspected labor trafficking and suspected sex trafficking to certain regional
6 navigators; authorizing a State’s Attorney or the Attorney General to investigate and
7 prosecute certain human trafficking; and generally relating to human trafficking.

8 BY repealing and reenacting, without amendments,

9 Article – Family Law

10 Section 5–701(a), (b)(1)(ii) and (iii), (m), (x), and (y)(2)

11 Annotated Code of Maryland

12 (2019 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

13 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,

14 Article – Family Law

15 Section 5–704(a)

16 Annotated Code of Maryland

17 (2019 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

18 BY adding to

19 Article – Criminal Law

20 Section 3–1104

21 Annotated Code of Maryland

22 (2021 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

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

25 **Article – Family Law**

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



1 5-701.

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

4 (b) (1) "Abuse" means:

5 (ii) sexual abuse of a child, whether physical injuries are sustained
6 or not; or

7 (iii) labor trafficking of a child by any individual.

8 (m) "Labor trafficking" means knowingly:

9 (1) taking, placing, harboring, persuading, inducing, or enticing a child by
10 force, fraud, or coercion to provide services or labor; or

11 (2) receiving a benefit or thing of value from the provision of services or
12 labor by a child that was induced by force, fraud, or coercion.

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

15 (y) "Sexual abuse" means any act that involves:

16 (2) sex trafficking of a child by any individual.

17 5-704.

18 (a) **(1)** Notwithstanding any other provision of law, including any law on
19 privileged communications, each health practitioner, police officer, educator, or human
20 service worker, acting in a professional capacity in this State who has reason to believe that
21 a child has been subjected to abuse or neglect:

22 [(1)] **(I)** shall notify the local department or the appropriate law
23 enforcement agency; [and]

24 [(2)] **(II)** if acting as a staff member of a hospital, public health agency,
25 child care institution, juvenile detention center, school, or similar institution, shall
26 immediately notify and give all information required by this section to the head of the
27 institution or the designee of the head; **AND**

28 **(III) MAY NOTIFY A REGIONAL NAVIGATOR AS DEFINED IN §**
29 **5-704.4 OF THIS SUBTITLE OF SUSPECTED SEX TRAFFICKING OR LABOR**
30 **TRAFFICKING IF, IN THE PROFESSIONAL JUDGMENT OF THE REPORTER,**

1 NOTIFICATION IS NECESSARY TO PREVENT SERIOUS HARM TO THE CHILD OR OTHER
2 CHILDREN.

3 (2) AN INDIVIDUAL AUTHORIZED TO NOTIFY A REGIONAL NAVIGATOR
4 UNDER PARAGRAPH (1)(III) OF THIS SUBSECTION MAY NOTIFY THE REGIONAL
5 NAVIGATOR:

6 (I) WITHOUT THE CONSENT OF THE CHILD; AND

7 (II) OVER THE EXPRESS OBJECTION OF THE CHILD.

8 Article – Criminal Law

9 3–1104.

10 (A) A STATE’S ATTORNEY OR THE ATTORNEY GENERAL MAY INVESTIGATE
11 AND PROSECUTE A VIOLATION OF THIS SUBTITLE OR A VIOLATION OF ANY CRIME
12 BASED ON THE ACT ESTABLISHING A VIOLATION OF THIS SUBTITLE.

13 (B) IF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL EXERCISES AUTHORITY UNDER
14 SUBSECTION (A) OF THIS SECTION, THE ATTORNEY GENERAL HAS ALL THE POWERS
15 AND DUTIES OF A STATE’S ATTORNEY TO INVESTIGATE AND PROSECUTE THE
16 VIOLATION.

17 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect
18 October 1, 2026.