

Mid Atlantic P.A.N.D.A. Coalition

5788 Endless Ocean Way, Columbia Maryland 21045

From: Mid Atlantic P.A.N.D.A. Coalition

To: Chair William Smith Jr.

Re: Senate Bill 206

Criminal Procedure-Motion to Vacate Judgement-Human Trafficking (True Freedom Act of 2020)

Date: January 29, 2020

The Mid-Atlantic P.A.N.D.A. is in Favor of SB 206

We represent the Mid Atlantic P.A.N.D.A. Coalition (Prevent Abuse and Neglect through Dental Awareness). We were established in 2000, our mission is "To create an atmosphere of understanding in dentistry and other professional communities which will result in the prevention of abuse and neglect through early identification and appropriate intervention for those who have been abused or neglected." Dentists and Dental Hygienists (Dental Professionals) are mandated by the State of Maryland to report suspected cases of abuse and neglect. Our coalition has established a Continuing Education (CE) course that educates Dental Professionals and other how to recognize, report, or refer. The Maryland State Board of Dental Examiners has deemed this course as a mandatory CE requirement for Dentists and Hygienists to renew their licenses. We also address domestic violence, elder abuse and human trafficking in our CE course.

This bill will allow the court to vacate certain convictions against human trafficked individuals who committed crimes only because their perpetrators made them commit the crime. These individuals did not choose this lifestyle for themselves they had no choice. They were coerced or threatened bodily harm if they didn't follow orders. Criminal punishment would only reinforce the injustice they have already endured. This vacate of convictions would allow the victim to not have a criminal record thus allowing them to obtain future employment so they can sustain themselves. We must allow these victims to heal and try to pursue a normal life.

Thank you for your consideration of SB 206 and be urge your support of this bill.

Respectfully submitted,

Mid-Atlantic P.A.N.D.A. Coalition

Carol Caiazza, RDH President

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