



BILL NUMBER: House Bill 575

TITLE: Education – Sexual Abuse and Assault
Awareness and Prevention Program – Human and Sex
Trafficking

COMMITTEE: Ways and Means

HEARING DATE: February 13, 2020

POSITION: Support

Summary: The Maryland Human Trafficking Task Force (MDHTTF) and its members respectfully request a favorable report on House Bill 575, as it will make a significant impact on the ability to combat human trafficking across the state.

House Bill 575 requires age-appropriate educational programming on awareness and prevention of human trafficking to be included in existing sexual abuse and assault prevention curriculum for students in grades six through eight.

Promoting awareness about the realities of human trafficking is essential in the fight to combat it. Maryland is uniquely positioned to be a “hot spot” for human trafficking activity, due to the interstate highways that run through it, its close proximity to numerous large cities, and its ports of call and major international airports. Unfortunately, a lack of knowledge that human trafficking is actually occurring in Maryland is commonplace, which only furthers the ability of traffickers to continue with their heinous crimes. Education on the awareness and prevention of human trafficking in an age-appropriate way for all students in Maryland is a crucial first step in adding more eyes and ears to anti-trafficking efforts. By way of illustration of need, the largest number of calls coming from Maryland to the National Human Trafficking Hotline in 2019 were from those observing or suspecting instances of human trafficking.

About MDHTTF: Formed in 2007 by the U.S. Attorney’s Office, the Attorney General of Maryland, and the State’s Attorney for Baltimore City, MDHTTF serves as the lead investigative, prosecutorial, and victim services coordinating body for anti-human trafficking activity in the State of Maryland. MDHTTF has grown to include most law enforcement agencies in the State, all child-serving state agencies, the Federal Bureau of Investigations, Homeland Security Investigations, most local State’s Attorney’s Offices, and dozens of victim service agencies. MDHTTF is comprised of five committees – legislative, law enforcement, victim services, public awareness, and training. During this time, MDHTTF has grown a robust understanding of the issue of human trafficking in Maryland.