

**HB575: Education – Sexual Abuse and Assault Awareness and Prevention Program
(Human and Sex Trafficking)**

**Ways and Means Committee
February 13, 2020**

Dear Ways and Means Committee Members,

I am writing in support of “*HB 0575-Human/Sex Trafficking*” sponsored by Delegate Johnson. In December I was approached by a parent who requested that I organize a youth and families Human Trafficking workshop. I was honored to be given the trust to hold such a workshop for my community. As a Social Worker I have attended numerous workshops on Human Trafficking as they have been geared toward professionals and have unfortunately a reactive tone. A Youth and Families Human Trafficking workshop was a proactive approach.

We held the training on a rainy, chilly Saturday morning, January 25th to be specific. We had forty-three attendees from across the Eastern Shore. Attendees included The Ladies of Nia, Inc. a mentor organization that works with school aged girls and has been in Caroline County for eleven years. They attended with their mentees and mentors. We had school personnel; a Transportation Coordinator who reported his bus drivers would benefit from this type of training as they were faced with a Human Trafficking incident. There was a Guidance Counselor who also serves as the Homeless Youth Liaison, who agreed this training should be in the school. We also had a pre-school teacher who attended with her son, who reported boys and girls alike need this training.

The presenters included our local Police Department, Amanda Kidd a Defense Educator, and the Eastern Shore Human Trafficking Taskforce, led by Kim and Kevin Hendricks. All the presenters approached the topic with delicacy. The stand-out however was the curriculum that the Eastern Shore Human Trafficking Task Force utilized. It was engaging, relative and interactive for the youth.

The real take away for me was after the event a sixth grader told her grandmother that “I get it now”, because they had been explaining to her the importance of knowing your surroundings and not leaving the home without permission. Having this youth focused training began a conversation that should not end. Having this training as a part of the Education Curriculum will provide early prevention and intervention for students and staff. A student may not understand a situation they have been placed in, with this training they will gain knowledge and know they can alert a trusted teacher or another adult.

Sincerely,

Councilwoman Doncella Wilson, LMSW,
Town of Denton