

Pamela Bodt
1900 Carrs Mill Road
Fallston, MD 21047

February 06, 2020

The Honorable Steven Johnson

215 House Office Building
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: HB 0575 Sexual Abuse and Assault Awareness and Prevention Program—Human & Sex Trafficking;
Ways and Means Committee

Dear Delegate Johnson,

I am writing in support of HB 0575. It is time that Maryland acts decisively to protect its young citizens and their families from an unthinkable crime, from which many never escape and of those that do, many are damaged forever. HB 0575 would provide the push needed to develop and deliver vital information to our most vulnerable youths and their families so that they may avoid becoming victims.

“Human Trafficking in America’s Schools,” a 2015 pamphlet of the U.S. Department of Education, is a very general guide for educators—not a curriculum—and is now five years old. A more recent 2019 National Institute of Health publication begins:

Human trafficking is a pressing public health concern which transcends all races, social classes, demographics, and gender. No population is exempt from the ever-present threat of traffickers. Human traffickers are motivated by greed, driven by quota, devoid of respect for human rights, preying upon the vulnerable, and damaging the psychological and physical well-being of their victims.¹

The publication goes on to remind us that prevention is a pillar identified 20 years ago in combating sex trafficking and that education is key. While Homeland Security, the State Department, and the Department of Defense have materials to inform government staff and citizens, there remains a need to package the material in an age-appropriate manner for Maryland children. And this task can best be accomplished by professional educators in the state of Maryland for the benefit of Maryland children and their families.

A family member once had a brush too close. She was a late teen and thankfully was able to avoid catastrophe, but our younger girls and boys may not be so lucky unless trained to avoid. Maryland needs to educate them on how to recognize and avoid being a victim of this crime.

Sincerely,
Pamela Bodt
Pamela Bodt
Fallston, MD

¹ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK430910/>