

**Kevin Hendricks**

Parent \* Eastern Shore Human Trafficking Member \* Prevention Project Ambassador  
Testimony in Support of

**HB 575 Education : Sexual Abuse and Assault Awareness and Prevention  
Program (Human and Sex Trafficking)**

**Sponsor: Delegate Steven Johnson**

Ways and Means Committee, 1 p.m. February 13, 2020

Thank you Chairman Kaiser, Vice-Chair Washington and the members of the Ways and Means Committee.....and my sincere thanks to Delegate Johnson and his staff for their hard work in taking the first step in empowering the youth in the state of Maryland against human and sex trafficking.

My name is Kevin Hendricks testifying in support of HB 575. I am an operating partner in the quick service industry in Wicomico and Dorchester Counties. I am a member of the Eastern Shore Human Trafficking Task Force and a Prevention Project Ambassador.

But, today, my comments and opinions come from a father's heart, who has been given the amazing privilege of raising two daughters.

In the fall of 2012, a light was shed and details surfaced that our oldest daughter who had just turned 17, was being groomed by a man.....a man our family knew.....a man she looked up to and admired.....a man who was in a position of authority over her, who should have had her best interest at heart.....but, instead used that position and trust to gain access to her heart and mind for his control. The process was slow and careful at first but, quickly escalated once she turned 17. It was as if he knew that the age of consent in Maryland was 17.

I clearly remember the night Kim and I met with him to confront him about what was going on. We quickly learned that we had no idea what we were dealing with. After setting up clear boundaries with this predator, he continued to contact our daughter....even through apps on her phone. We immediately contacted our local sheriff and took steps to secure Peace Orders, both temporary and final, to assist with protecting our daughter and family.

We were told by investigators from the Wicomico County Sheriff's Office and CAC that she was being "groomed", a term we knew little about. We were told that this man was "very good" at what he was doing and we were told that he was "dancing in the fire" of involvement in child pornography....we were told there had been a fire at the State's Attorney's Office and some files had been damaged....and then we were told nothing.....eventually, after trying to get answers, our investigator told us that the State's Attorney did not want to bring a case against this man.....and we were left to pick up the pieces and begin to heal our family.....

It is absolutely critical to educate, equip, and empower the youth in the state of Maryland to prevent them from falling prey to the lures and tactics of predators.....and to child trafficking.

I plead for your support in moving **HB 575** forward. Thank you for your time today.