



BILL NUMBER: Senate Bill 109

TITLE: Secretary of State – Address Confidentiality Programs – Merger of Programs and Expanded Participant Eligibility

COMMITTEE: Judicial Proceedings

HEARING DATE: January 14, 2021

POSITION: Statement of Information

The Maryland Human Trafficking Task Force (MDHTTF) and its members respectfully submits this Statement of Information on Senate Bill 109.

SB 109 merges two similar address shielding and confidentiality programs in the state, the Human Trafficking Address Confidentiality Program for victims of human trafficking and the Maryland Safe At Home Address Confidentiality Program for victims of domestic violence. It further expands and clarifies the eligibility of the program to survivors of threatened, attempted, or actual domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, harassment, or human trafficking, and allows for a person who resides in the same household of the survivor to apply to the program.

MDHTTF supports efforts to dismantle human trafficking by strengthening laws to prosecute traffickers, providing services and rehabilitation to victims, and increasing awareness of the issue. The Human Trafficking Address Confidentiality Program was statutorily created in 2014 and has been an invaluable tool in protecting survivors of human trafficking by providing a substitute address unknown to and protected from their trafficker and accepting service of process for mail. Eligible participants are provided these services for four years and there are very limited exceptions as to when the Secretary of State may disclose a participant's actual address. As survivors and survivor-advocates have sometimes found navigating the program difficult and confusing, MDHTTF hopes that this merger and expansion of eligibility continues to serve those who need it adequately and properly.

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.

For further questions, please contact the co-chairs of the Legislative Committee of MDHTTF, Amanda Rodriguez at arodriguez@turnaroundinc.org or Anne Wallerstedt at azwallerstedt@gmail.com.