



EASTERN SHORE HUMAN TRAFFICKING TASK FORCE

Moving forward to combat this evil together

The Honorable William C. Smith Jr.
Chairman, Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
2 East Miller Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

March 28, 2022

Dear Senator,

**House Bill 833 - Criminal Law - Victims of Child Sex Trafficking - Safe Harbor and Service Response
Position - FAVORABLE**

Child sex trafficking victims deserve a way out of the juvenile legal system when charged with prostitution and other related crimes. Therefore, the Eastern Shore Human Trafficking Task Force supports HB 833 as it will protect, rather than criminalizes, children who are victims of human trafficking, and provide them with the specialized services they require.

Human trafficking is the second highest grossing criminal enterprise. For the pimps and traffickers, it is high profit and low risk. For the victims and their families, it is a far-reaching tragedy and a long road to recovery for the survivors. There have been several cases on the eastern shore where minors have been trafficking victims subjected to unspeakable acts. Minor victims deserve protection and care not incarceration. They need a Safe Harbor to protect and assist them, HB 833 will meet this need throughout Maryland.

For these reasons and to improve Maryland's child sex trafficking laws which recently were given an F, the lowest possible grade, by Shared Hope International the Eastern Shore Human Trafficking Task Force urges the Committee to give HB 833 a favorable report.

Yours Truly

Edwin Thomas, Co-Chair
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***The MISSION of the Eastern Shore Human Trafficking Task Force is to:
Combat human trafficking (sex and labor exploitation) by encouraging, supporting, and promoting
awareness, prevention, and education throughout the Eastern Shore.***