



Bill No: SB768
Title: Criminal Law - Victims of Child Sex Trafficking - Safe Harbor and Service Response
Committee: Judicial Proceedings
Hearing: March 8, 2022
Position: FAVORABLE

The Maryland Legislative Agenda for Women (MLAW) is a statewide coalition of women's groups and individuals formed to provide a non-partisan, independent voice for Maryland women and families. MLAW's purpose is to advocate for legislation affecting women and families. To accomplish this goal, MLAW creates an annual legislative agenda with issues voted on by MLAW members and endorsed by organizations and individuals from all over Maryland. **SB768 - Criminal Law - Victims of Child Sex Trafficking - Safe Harbor and Service Response** is a priority on the 2022 MLAW Agenda and we urge your support.

SB768 would provide a safe harbor for child victims of sex trafficking and prevent prosecution for acts committed as a result of trafficking including prostitution and other related offenses. Legislation was passed in 2019 that established the regional navigator program that connects child survivors of trafficking to necessary services. This bill will benefit women and girls by preventing them from being criminalized for being a victim. Children, would instead, receive services and assistance instead of being forced to fight against the stigmas associated with societal views on sex work and the criminal justice system for acts that were committed against them.

Most trafficking victims are women and girls. Currently children can be charged in the criminal or juvenile justice system for acts that are directly related to their victimization including prostitution and other related offenses. Children are, by law, considered victims of human trafficking per se if they are engaging in sex work; however, unlike any other victimization, they can also be charged for the very act that makes them a victim. This paradox in the criminal justice system leads to further victimization both as children, but often leads to further abuse as adults.

For these reasons, MLAW strongly urges the passage of SB768.



MLAW 2022 Supporting Organizations

The following organizations have signed on in support of our 2022 Legislative Agenda:

Allegany County Women's Action Coalition
American Association of University Women - Anne Arundel County
American Association of University Women - Maryland
American Association of University Women - Garrett Branch
Anne Arundel County Commission for Women
Anne Arundel County NOW (National Organization for Women)
Baltimore County Commission for Women
Baltimore Jewish Council
Baltimore NOW (National Organization for Women)
Business and Professional Women of Maryland
For All Seasons, Inc.
Forward Justice Maryland
Indivisible Central Maryland
Make A Difference Monday
Maryland NOW (National Organization for Women)
Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence
Maryland Women's Heritage Center
MoCoWoMen
MomsRising
Montgomery County NOW (National Organization for Women)
Montgomery County Commission for Women
Montgomery County Women's Democratic Club
National Coalition For Sexual Freedom
National Organization for Women
NCBW Anne Arundel County Chapter
Prince George's County Alumnae Chapter
Prince George's County Drug Policy Coalition, Inc.
Reproductive Justice Inside
South Prince George's Business and Professional Women
WISE - WISE Women of Maryland
Women's Equality Day Celebration across Maryland
Women's Law Center of Maryland
Yellow Rose Foundation
Zonta Club Mid Maryland
Zonta Club of Annapolis

Maryland Legislative Agenda for Women

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