

## **Maryland - The Transportation Hub for Human Trafficking**

Human trafficking is the second fastest growing criminal enterprise in the world, with an estimated 27 million victims and \$150 billion in profits each year. While approximately **14,000-17,500** people are trafficked into the United States, roughly **200,000** victims are **citizens** of the US. Victims trafficked for sexual exploitation on average, are **females 12 -14** years of age. The intersectionality of sexism, racism, poverty, trauma, adultification, and sexualization are all systemic conditions that allow women and girls to become easy targets for traffickers to entrap, transport, and exploit victims.

**Maryland is literally at the intersection of human trafficking in America.** All major transportation thoroughfares (i.e. I-70, I-95, the Port of Baltimore, BWI Airport, Amtrak, Bus Stations, Truck Stops, Public transit, Taxis, Limousine and Rideshare services) conveniently merge into our hospitality destinations (i.e. the BLOCK, convention center, ball parks, casinos, and hotels), enabling perpetrators to easily access "Services". Counties with the highest reports of human trafficking are located along these thoroughfares.

Human trafficking can have long term, detrimental effects on victims. Women and girls forced into sex trafficking experience higher levels of depression, anxiety, isolation and trauma far beyond that of other crime victims. They sustain physical assaults resulting in serious injuries such as broken bones, concussions, bruises, burns and starvation. Birth control and gynecological care are often withheld from victims, making them susceptible to life-long and life-threatening reproductive diseases and injuries such as sexually transmitted diseases, HIV/AIDS, unwanted pregnancies, miscarriages and infertility. Drug and alcohol addiction are prevalent among victims of human trafficking.

The Maryland General Assembly is strategically poised to curb human trafficking in-state, and throughout the country. Building on the successful passage of legislation requiring Innkeepers to receive training to identify and report suspected human trafficking, **Senator Jackson introduced SB203 referred to as "See Someone, Save Someone"** which provides the same training for transportation workers. Additionally, visible signage and public service announcements in transit facilities would instruct victims on how to seek on-site assistance. Well established, on-line training videos, signage and PSAs are available in multi-languages, and free of charge.