



[www.marylandwomen.org](http://www.marylandwomen.org)

# Maryland Commission for Women

A Commission of the Maryland Department of Human Services

51 Monroe Street, Ste. 1034 – Rockville, Maryland 20850  
[www.marylandwomen.org](http://www.marylandwomen.org)

February 1, 2023

The Honorable Luke Clippinger, Chair  
The Honorable David Moon, Vice Chair  
House Office Building – Room 101  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

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Re: HB 297 – Victims of Child Sex Trafficking and Human  
Trafficking – Safe Harbor for Sexually Exploited Youth

Dear Delegates Clippinger and Moon and Members of the House  
Judiciary Committee:

The Maryland Commission for Women writes to you with respect to HB  
297 – Victims of Child Sex Trafficking and Human Trafficking – Safe  
Harbor for Sexually Exploited Youth Act (the “Safe Harbor Act”). Sex  
Trafficking and Human Trafficking is an issue with which the Maryland  
Commission for Women (“MCW”) has long been concerned.

As you may know, the MCW was established in 1965 and was set in state  
law in 1971. An office of the Department of Human Services, the  
Commission is a 25-member advisory board whose duties outlined in its  
enabling legislation include: study the status of women in our state,  
recommend methods of overcoming discrimination, recognize women’s  
accomplishments and contributions, and provide informed advice to the  
executive and legislative branches of government on the issues concerning  
the women of our state. It is to fulfill this mandate that the Commission  
writes to you today.

Let us explain why this legislation is important: According to the  
Governor’s Office of Crime Prevention, Youth and Victim Services:  
“Human trafficking is a horrible crime that continues to occur in Maryland  
and affects all parts of the State. Three major airports, inexpensive bus  
transportation, train service along the east coast, large sporting events and  
disposable income makes Maryland an attractive destination for  
traffickers.”

Although efforts have been made in the recent past to address certain issues  
relating to human trafficking, the MCW believes that more can and should  
be done where young people – and particularly children under the age of 18  
– are victims. The Safe Harbor Act would amend Maryland’s existing  
laws in three critical ways:

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- Provide a safe harbor for child victims of sex trafficking.
- Help prevent child victims from further victimization by connecting them to rehabilitative and supportive services through the already established Regional Navigator program.
- Providing a pathway to prevent any criminal or delinquent charges brought against these youths that are directly related to trafficking.

We ask that Maryland be a voice of leadership on this important issue.

The Maryland Commission for Women requests your support for the passage of this important legislation.

With very best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tawanda Bailey". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being more prominent than the last.

Tawanda Bailey, Chair  
Maryland Commission for Women