



DATE: February 5, 2023

BILL NUMBER: HB 297

POSITION: Favorable

The Frederick County Human Trafficking Response Team supports HB 297.

HB 297 is a tool to assist minor victims of human trafficking in obtaining necessary services for their victimization by referring them to the regional navigator.

Frederick County established the Human Trafficking Response Team in 2018. We have had a Regional Navigator, housed at Heartly House, since 2021. As of January 2023, our Regional Navigator has a current case load of 49 victims/survivors. In 2022 alone, our Regional Navigator served 21 minor victims of human trafficking. Not a single referral to our Regional Navigator came from the Department of Juvenile Services.

It is imperative that victims of human trafficking receive the services they need. By passing HB 297, this committee will ensure that minor victims of human trafficking who come into contact with law enforcement, and subsequently DJS, will be referred to the Regional Navigator for services.

Human Trafficking is a heinous crime. The HTRT urges this committee to send a message to traffickers that no longer will their minor victims be punished for the crimes the trafficker is forcing them to commit. And further, that Maryland is supporting minor victims of human trafficking by ensuring they receive the services they need.

For these reasons, the Frederick County Human Trafficking Response Team requests a favorable report on HB 297.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "L. Carpenter".

Lindsey M. Carpenter
Frederick County
State's Attorney's Office

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be "Jennifer Collins".

Jennifer Collins
Heartly House

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be "Jessica Beall".

Jessica Beall
Frederick County
Dept. of Social Services