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Judiciary Committee

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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
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**HB297 - SAFE HARBOR – CRIMINAL LAW – VICTIMS OF CHILD SEX TRAFFICKING
AND HUMAN TRAFFICKING – SAFE HARBOR AND SERVICE RESPONSE**

FAVORABLE

TO: Chair Clippinger, Vice Chair Moon and members of the Judiciary Committee

This proposed legislation intends to vacate crimes committed by a child victim of sex or human trafficking if there is a traceable direct nexus between the crime and the trafficking. Without this bill, child victims of sex or human trafficking may be forced to commit a crime on behalf of their trafficker then further victimized by being convicted of that crime without considering the duress the child is facing every day by their trafficker.

Safe harbor intends to protect minors from being charged with prostitution, as well. Minors can still be charged with prostitution in 23 states (1), including Maryland. This proposed legislation seeks to codify common sense reasoning. Maryland does not allow children to vote, drink, smoke, or even enlist. “Between 2010 and 2020, 110 youths were arrested for prostitution and commercialized vice in the state ¹” Maryland failed 110 children in 10 years. We cannot continue to allow these injustices on any front. Morally, financially, or otherwise.²

¹ [Maryland child sex-trafficking victims may get protected from prosecution - The Washington Post](#)

² <https://www.marylandmatters.org/2023/01/31/safe-harbor-legislation-seeks-to-protect-minors-who-are-victims-of-trafficking/>