



EASTERN SHORE HUMAN TRAFFICKING TASK FORCE

Moving forward to combat this evil together

BILL NO:	House Bill 297
TITLE:	Criminal Law - Victims of Child Sex Trafficking and Human Trafficking - Safe Harbor and Service Response
COMMITTEE:	Judiciary
HEARING DATE:	February 9, 2023
POSITION:	FAVORABLE

The Eastern Shore Human Trafficking Task Force supports HB 297 because child sex trafficking victims deserve a way out of the juvenile legal system when charged with prostitution and other related crimes. Therefore, the Eastern Shore Human Trafficking Task Force supports HB 297 as it will protect, rather than criminalizes, children who are victims of human trafficking, and provide them with the specialized services they require.

Human trafficking is the second highest grossing criminal enterprise. For the pimps and traffickers, it is high profit. For the victims and their families, it is a far-reaching tragedy and a long road to recovery for the survivors. There have been cases on the eastern shore where minors have been trafficking victims subjected to unspeakable acts. They need a Safe Harbor to protect and assist them, HB 297 will go a long way in meeting this need throughout Maryland.

Maryland needs to provide protection and care rather than jail time for minors who are victimized by criminals. The young victims are not criminals. For these reasons the Eastern Shore Human Trafficking Task Force urges the Committee to give HB 297 a favorable report.