



**BILL NO:** House Bill 461  
**TITLE:** Education - Sexual Abuse and Assault Awareness and Prevention  
Program Human and Sex Trafficking  
**COMMITTEE:** Ways and Means  
**HEARING DATE:** February 15, 2023  
**POSITION:** **SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS**

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The Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence (MNADV) is the state domestic violence coalition that brings together victim service providers, allied professionals, and concerned individuals for the common purpose of reducing intimate partner and family violence and its harmful effects on our citizens. **MNADV urges the House Ways and Means Committee to issue a favorable report with amendments on HB 461.**

House Bill 461 would require the State Board of Education and certain nonpublic schools to develop and implement a program of age-appropriate education on the awareness and prevention of sexual abuse and assault that includes the awareness and prevention of human and sex trafficking for 6<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> grade students. There are many intersections between human trafficking and domestic violence including the power and control dynamics found in both forms of violence. In 2019, the top recruitment tactic for trafficking was an “intimate partner/marriage proposition” according to the data reported by the National Human Trafficking Hotline.<sup>1</sup>

MNADV believes that education and awareness is critical for the prevention of human trafficking. Research and best practices surrounding human trafficking is continuously evolving. Since human trafficking is such a specialized field, we believe that experts in the field of human trafficking and those with direct experience working with survivors of trafficking should be involved in the development of the curriculum. Further, since new research and best practices regarding human trafficking are continuously developed, the curriculum should be reviewed at regular intervals to ensure that it is reflective of the most recent knowledge of human trafficking. In 2019, Maryland passed a long overdue statute to criminalize labor trafficking in the state. We would further recommend that any curriculum address both sex trafficking and labor trafficking.

MNADV would also suggest that any education on trafficking include ***education on the safe and healthy use of technology and online communications to avoid violence and exploitation*** and ***education on healthy and non-violent relationships***. Since so many victims of trafficking are groomed by traffickers

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<sup>1</sup> <https://humantraffickinghotline.org/sites/default/files/2022-12/Polaris-2019-US-National-Human-Trafficking-Hotline-Data-Report.pdf>



pretending to be an intimate partner, both of these components are crucial to a complete education on this topic intended to make students aware and prevent victimization.

For the above stated reasons, the **Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence** urges a **favorable report with amendments on HB 461.**

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