



Maryland
Hospital Association

February 16, 2024

To: The Honorable William C. Smith Jr., Chair, Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

Re: Letter of Support - Senate Bill 550 - Children - Labor Trafficking

Dear Chair Smith:

On behalf of the Maryland Hospital Association's (MHA) member hospitals and health systems, we appreciate the opportunity to comment in support of Senate Bill 550.

Across the state, hospital-based sexual assault forensic exam ([SAFE](#)) programs employ forensic nurse examiners. These registered nurses receive special training in evidence collection and are experts in delivering trauma-informed care to survivors of violence and abuse. State law ensures survivors of sexual assault have access to emergency medical treatment for their injuries with no out-of-pocket expense. Hospitals care for survivors of all forms of violence including children who have experienced sex and labor trafficking.

Senate Bill 550 would include survivors of child labor trafficking in the Safe Harbor Regional Navigator Grant Program. This program provides supportive trauma-informed services including safety planning, emergency response, basic living needs, trauma counseling, and mental health services, drug and alcohol abuse treatment, legal services, victim advocacy, and case management. Participation in the program would benefit any child survivors regardless of the form of trafficking.

Ensuring a strong safety net for survivors is essential to promote their health and well-being.

For these reasons, we request a *favorable* report on SB 550.

For more information, please contact:

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