

2024-01-31 SB153 Support.pdf

Uploaded by: Adam Spangler

Position: FAV

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January 31, 2024

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

FROM: Adam Spangler
Legislative Aide, Legislative Affairs, Office of the Attorney General

RE: Senate Bill 153 - Maryland Department of Transportation - Child
Exploitation and Human Trafficking Awareness, Training, and Response-
Support in Concept

The Office of Attorney General (OAG) supports the intent of Senate Bill 153, Senator Jackson's legislation to raise awareness of child exploitation and human trafficking amongst transportation sector employees and contractors. According to the National Human Trafficking Hotline, "[s]ex trafficking occurs at truck stops in the United States often in to forms, through commercial sex and through fake massage businesses."¹ Similarly, according to the American Association of Airport Executives, "[t]he first step in combating human trafficking is learning to spot warning signs, and travel industry employees should participate in training seminars that are tailored to them. Airport, airline and security personnel who have completed human trafficking awareness training are a vital first line of defense in the effort to prevent this crime."² Senate Bill 153 can greatly heighten awareness and, through associated reporting, improve public safety.

¹ National Human Trafficking Hotline: Truck Stop-Based, available online at: <https://humantraffickinghotline.org/en/sex-trafficking-venuesindustries/truck-stop-based> (last visited Jan. 27, 2024).

² American Association of Airport Executives: Human Trafficking Research, available online at: <https://aaae.org/humantrafficking> (last visited Jan. 27, 2024).

While the OAG supports the intent of Senate Bill 153, we have concerns about implementation of the bill. Subsection (f) of the bill provide that “an employer or employee may not be held civilly or criminally liable for reporting or responding in good faith to a suspected incident of child exploitation or human trafficking.” The exemption from criminal liability for any “response” to a suspected incident, so long as in good faith, may be overbroad. The bill does not define what a “response” to an incident might entail.

Additionally, there is concern about requirements for contractors. As is, Senate Bill 153 is vague as to whether the requirements for “contractors” apply to just those with direct contracts with the State or would the bill also apply to subcontractors at the airport?

For the foregoing reason, we urge the Committee to favorably report Senate Bill 153.

cc: Committee Members

SB153 - Support.pdf

Uploaded by: Dawn Luedtke

Position: FAV



MONTGOMERY COUNTY COUNCIL
ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND

DAWN LUEDTKE
COUNCILMEMBER
DISTRICT 7

January 30, 2024

The Honorable William C. Smith
Chair, Judicial Proceedings
2 East
Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: *Senate Bill 153, Maryland Department of Transportation - Child Exploitation and Human Trafficking Awareness, Training, and Response.*

Dear Chair Smith,

As we wrap up Human Trafficking Prevention month, I write to urge the Committee's support for Senate Bill 153 - Maryland Department of Transportation - Child Exploitation and Human Trafficking Awareness, Training, and Response.

According to the U.S. Department of State, an estimated 27.6 million people around the world are victims of human trafficking, in which violence, threats, deception, coercion, and other tactics are used to manipulate people of all ages into providing labor or services unwillingly, including forced participation in commercial sex work. Maryland must do its part to prevent and respond to human trafficking through educational and awareness programs such as those that would be authorized by the passage of SB153. Our transportation sector plays a unique role in the facilitation of trafficked victims throughout Maryland, and can play a vital role in stopping it. I am a member of the Montgomery County Human Trafficking Prevention Committee, which is working with our local Ride On bus service to feature messaging making people aware of signs of human trafficking and providing contact information for intervention and support.

The bill offers a training program to empower transportation workers with the basic knowledge and understanding necessary to identify and report instances of human trafficking and child exploitation. This will help to reduce the victimization of vulnerable populations targeted by traffickers for sexual and labor exploitation.

The affirmative actions required by SB153 will go a long way to strengthening human trafficking prevention efforts and boosting our "see something, say something" crime prevention through

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information sharing and awareness. I appreciate the Fiscal & Policy Note referencing other education and awareness efforts undertaken with respect to our K-12 public schools, at the time of licensure for CDL holders, and for innkeepers. SB153 represents the next natural step to educate both those who work within the transportation industry and members of the public who are using public transportation, stopping at our rest areas, transit stations, airports, and ports to heighten awareness.

Very truly yours,



Dawn Luedtke
Montgomery County Council
District 7

cc: Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee

Maryland Catholic Conference_FAV_SB153.pdf

Uploaded by: Diane Arias

Position: FAV



MARYLAND
CATHOLIC
CONFERENCE

January 30, 2024

Senate Bill 153

**Maryland Department of Transportation – Child Exploitation and Human
Trafficking Awareness, Training, and Response
Judicial Proceedings Committee**

Position: Favorable

The Maryland Catholic Conference (MCC) is the public policy representative of the three (arch)dioceses serving Maryland, which together encompass over one million Marylanders. Statewide, their parishes, schools, hospitals, and numerous charities combine to form our state's second largest social service provider network, behind only our state government.

Senate Bill 153 requires the Maryland Department of Transportation to develop and implement a training program for certain transportation-sector employees on the identification and reporting of suspected child exploitation and human trafficking. The bill requires specific employees to complete the training program, and employers to certify this completion. The bill also requires pertinent employers, in consultation with the Department, to establish a procedure for reporting suspected incidents of child exploitation or human trafficking to appropriate staff, law enforcement, or the National Human Trafficking Resource Center Hotline. Employers shall implement a child exploitation and human trafficking prevention policy for employees. The bill also calls for the Department to develop signage and require placement at certain locations to help provide information and resources for child exploitation and human trafficking victims. The legislation also requires frequent public service announcements in both English and Spanish at Transit Stations, Airports, Port Facilities, and Highway Rest Stops.

The Maryland Catholic Conference supports this bill because it educates those working in the transportation sector on trafficking and aids law enforcement in their efforts to identify and end human trafficking. It will also help the public become more aware of how they can help fight against trafficking. It will also help victims learn how they can report trafficking. Horribly, Maryland's central location has facilitated its development as both a pass-through state and a destination for human traffickers. Traffickers utilize many of Maryland's highways, especially Interstate-95, to connect victims to major east coast cities such as New York, Baltimore, Philadelphia, and Washington, D.C. The Maryland Human Trafficking Task Force has identified incidents of sex trafficking at Maryland truck stops, and data from the National Human

Trafficking Resource Center (NHTRC) suggests that approximately 70 percent of human trafficking incidents occur in our nation's truck stops.¹ Three major airports, inexpensive bus transportation, train service along the east coast, large sporting events, and disposable income makes Maryland an increasingly attractive destination for traffickers.² Pope Francis frequently condemns the horror of trafficking in persons, declaring, "Human trafficking is an open wound on the body of contemporary society, a scourge upon the body of Christ."³

This bill will go a long way in helping fight against child exploitation and human trafficking. For these reasons, the Maryland Catholic Conference asks for a favorable report on **SB 153**.

Thank you for your consideration.

¹ <http://www.mdhumantrafficking.org/maryland>

² <https://goccp.maryland.gov/victim-services/human-trafficking/>

³ https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2014/april/documents/papa-francesco_20140410_tratta-persone-umane.html

SB153 Human Trafficking Letter.pdf

Uploaded by: Essita Duncan

Position: FAV



www.marylandwomen.org

Maryland Commission for Women

A Commission of the Maryland Department of Human Services

51 Monroe Street, Ste. 1034 – Rockville, Maryland 20850
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January 31, 2024

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The Honorable William C. Smith, Jr., Chair
The Honorable Jeff Waldstreicher, Vice Chair
Judicial Proceeding Committee
2 East
Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Re: SB 153 – Maryland Department of Transportation – Child Exploitation and Human Trafficking Awareness, Training, and Response

Dear Senators Smith and Waldstreicher and Members of the Judicial Proceeding Committee:

The Maryland Commission for Women writes to you with respect to SB 153 – Maryland Department of Transportation – Child Exploitation and Human Trafficking Awareness, Training, and Response. Child Exploitation and Human Trafficking is an issue with which the Maryland Commission for Women (“MCW”) has long been concerned.

As you may know, the MCW was established in 1965 and was set in state law in 1971. An office of the Department of Human Services, the Commission is a 25-member advisory board whose duties outlined in its enabling legislation include: study the status of women in our state, recommend methods of overcoming discrimination, recognize women’s accomplishments and contributions, and provide informed advice to the executive and legislative branches of government on the issues concerning the women of our state. It is to fulfill this mandate that the Commission writes to you today.

Let us explain why this legislation is important: According to the Governor’s Office of Crime Prevention, Youth and Victim Services: “Human trafficking is a horrible crime that continues to occur in Maryland and affects all parts of the State. Three major airports, inexpensive bus transportation, train service along the east coast, large sporting events and disposable income makes Maryland an attractive destination for traffickers.”

Although efforts have been made in the recent past to address certain issues relating to human trafficking, the MCW believes that more can and should be done where young people – and particularly children under the age of 18 – are victims. The Act would amend Maryland’s existing transportation laws in three critical ways:

- Help prevent child victims from further victimization by requiring mandatory training for transportation operators in order to improve the identification and reporting of suspected child exploitation and human trafficking.

- Development of procedures for reporting suspected child exploitation and human trafficking by transportation operators and implementation of a prevention policy.
- Providing a pathway to prevent any criminal or delinquent liability for reporting or responding to a suspected incident of child exploitation or human trafficking.

We ask that Maryland be a voice of leadership on this important issue.

The Maryland Commission for Women requests your support for the passage of this important legislation.

With very best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tawanda A. Bailey', written in a cursive style.

Tawanda A. Bailey, Chair
Maryland Commission for Women

(The positions expressed in this letter are those of the Commission for Women and do not necessarily reflect the position of the Governor or the Department of Human Services.)

2024JacksonTestimonySB153.pdf

Uploaded by: Michael Jackson

Position: FAV

MICHAEL A. JACKSON
Legislative District 27
Calvert, Charles and
Prince George's Counties

Budget and Taxation Committee

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Chair, Pensions

Public Safety, Transportation, and
Environment



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District Office
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TESTIMONY - SENATE BILL 153

***MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION –
CHILD EXPLOITATION AND HUMAN TRAFFICKING
AWARENESS, TRAINING, AND RESPONSE***

JUDICIAL PROCEEDINGS COMMITTEE

JANUARY 31, 2024

Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and Committee Members:

Senate Bill 153 is a straight-forward piece of legislation designed to combat child exploitation and human trafficking in our communities and to equip employees working with the Maryland Department of Transportation with the information necessary to recognize the signs of these crimes.

This bill would require the Maryland Department of Transportation to put in place both a human trafficking recognition education training program curriculum (offering guidance to employees and contractors of Maryland transit agencies, taxicab drivers, and transportation network operators on ways to recognize and respond to the signs associated with human trafficking) and a reporting procedure to when such crimes are recognized. Additionally, the bill would require the development and implementation of human trafficking related signage and audible public service announcements throughout Maryland transit stations, airports, port facilities, and highway rest stops.

As someone who spent the majority of his professional career in law enforcement, and as someone who personally worked to stop these types of crimes as Prince George's County Sheriff, I am confident that this legislation will provide a means to protect some of those victimized by this hidden and heinous crime in our State.

For the reasons listed above, I ask for a favorable report of Senate Bill 153.

1.31.24 Maryland Human Trafficking Testimony (FINA

Uploaded by: Michele Blackwell

Position: FWA

Judicial Proceedings Committee
Chair, Senator William C. Smith, Jr.
Wednesday January 31, 2024

Written Testimony for Uber Technologies, Inc. on SB0153

Human trafficking is a violation of human rights that affects 50 million people around the world, with one in 3 victims being children. Maryland of course is not immune from this problem. Since 2007, the National Human Trafficking Hotline has identified 1,533 cases of human trafficking in Maryland, with nearly 3,000 victims. Awareness is an important component to fighting human trafficking.

Uber recognizes that as a technology company engaged in the transportation system, our company is in a powerful position to raise awareness around human trafficking and, with the state's help, make an impact.

Uber is already a national leader in this space. We have partnered with leading organizations like Polaris and ECPAT-USA to advocate for change and increase awareness about the signs of human trafficking for drivers who use the Uber platform. Thus, Uber is supportive of this effort to increase awareness of human trafficking among drivers active on the Uber platform in Maryland. We would, however, suggest two minor adjustments to the legislation to ensure that the requirement is appropriately tailored to the needs of drivers on Uber's platform.

First, and foremost, Uber would like to have the option to continue to offer our current human trafficking education to drivers. These materials are uniquely tailored to our industry and were developed closely with experts at Polaris, a nationally recognized human trafficking prevention organization. Allowing Uber to offer this education will help ensure that we can tailor the materials for rideshare drivers and adjust as needed. Moreover, Uber's current educational video meets many of the requirements currently outlined in SB0153.

Second, we want to help ensure we are balancing the ability of drivers to get on the road with safety. Maryland is the only state in the country that requires individual licenses for rideshare drivers. As currently drafted, the bill would require that drivers complete the training before they take a first trip. This step is likely to add additional complexity to an already complex process - and will put another barrier in place which will make it difficult for drivers to earn. It also threatens to upend the hard work of the Maryland Public Service Commission, who processes TNO licenses in the state.

Thus, we suggest allowing drivers to obtain provisional licensure prior to completing the training, while requiring that they complete the training within 90 days of taking a trip. This will help balance safety, with the needs of drivers who rely on the Uber platform to earn.

MPA_ Comm_SB0153_Support w Amendments20240129.pdf

Uploaded by: stephanie wolf

Position: FWA



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January 29, 2024

Senator William C. Smith, Chair
Senator Jeff Waldstreicher, Vice Chair
Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
2 East
Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and Members of the Committee:

RE: SB0153: Maryland Department of Transportation - Child Exploitation and Human Trafficking Awareness, Training, and Response

Position: SUPPORT (with amendments)

The Maryland Psychological Association, (MPA), which represents over 1,000 doctoral-level psychologists throughout the state, asks the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee to FAVORABLY report on SB 0153.

Human trafficking and sexual exploitation thrive in the darkness of ignorance, and that veil is pierced only through educating people on how to identify it and where to report it. As those in the transportation industry frequently come into contact with individuals being trafficked and sexually exploited, it is of utmost importance that we require they be trained in how to respond when they find themselves in its presence. Requiring those individuals then to report those incidents to the National Human Trafficking Hotline, however, will create an influx of calls to the staff at the hotline that will overwhelm their overstretched resources. To that end, we would advise instead building a means for reporting within our state as part of our existing statewide task force. Creating an in-state reporting system will also serve as a means to streamline responses to reports and access to resources for those being removed from trafficking and sexually exploitative situations.

Thank you for considering our comments on SB 0153. If we can be of any further assistance as the Judicial Proceedings Committee considers this bill, please do not hesitate to contact MPA's Legislative Chair, Dr. Stephanie Wolf at mpalegislativcommittee@gmail.com.

Respectfully submitted,

Brian Corrado, PsyD

President, MPA

Stephanie Wolf, JD, PhD

Chair, MPA Legislative Committee

cc: Richard Bloch, Esq., Counsel for Maryland Psychological Association; Barbara Brocato & Dan Shattuck, MPA Government Affairs

Task Force Testimony Final SB153.pdf

Uploaded by: Amanda Rodriguez

Position: INFO



BILL NUMBER: SB153

TITLE: Maryland Department of Transportation - Child Exploitation and Human Trafficking Awareness, Training, and Response

COMMITTEE: JPR

HEARING DATE: January 31, 2024

POSITION: Information

The Maryland Human Trafficking Task Force (MHTTF), formed in 2007, is a collaborative of multiple disciplines, including law enforcement, prosecutors, victim service organizations, and state government agencies. The MHTTF has identified specific opportunities to improve Maryland's human trafficking-related statutes based on over a decade of local and national anti-trafficking experiences, consultation with state-based and federal partners, as well as time spent engaging with stakeholders across the state.

The Maryland Human Trafficking Task Force respectfully provides the following information for consideration on this bill.

Transportation is a key resource used by survivors of trafficking to reduce the potential for harm while working in the commercial sex trade, such as safe passage from abusive situations and/or the ability to avoid working on the streets. Survivors rely on different modes of transportation from buses, trains, subways, and airports, as well as licensed and unlicensed taxi services and rideshare programs. To a trafficking survivor, accessible transportation is safety.

This bill, as drafted, provides for training, signage and protocol development for transportation employees in hopes of identifying and providing support for trafficked individuals. The nuanced nature of trafficking requires increased protections, and access to local resources. The Maryland Human Trafficking Task Force works collaboratively and across disciplines to provide a comprehensive response to the issue of trafficking in our state. The Task Force can provide training and expertise across the state and should be involved in the development and implementation of training for transportation employees.

Additionally, in protocol development, identification of potential trafficking situation should only be done by qualified professionals who can quickly and safely provide support to those seeking assistance, rather than rely on the assumptions and stereotypes that most people hold with regard to those who trade sex. Requesting support from law enforcement upon the identification of a potential trafficking situation can lead to further harms, including incarceration and/or physical harm to the survivor. While law enforcement

is a key player in addressing human trafficking, their involvement must be solely at the express request of the survivor.

This bill also requests that the National Human Trafficking Hotline be given as an additional resource; however, providers across the state of Maryland have reported that these referrals do not commonly lead to additional support being provided locally. Most jurisdictions have local resources that should be contacted over national resources, like local trafficking task forces, regional navigators and other victim service providers. Local resources are more apt at responding immediately and ensure the survivor receives the assistance they need, which may include, but is not limited to, safe/emergency housing, legal assistance, or supportive counseling.

Despite these reservations concerning the training and reporting provisions of the bill, we recognize that transportation workers are in a unique position to help identify potential trafficking situations. As a result, we would welcome an opportunity to discuss potential amendments to the current language of the bill so that it does not risk causing additional harm to all those who trade sex, including survivors of trafficking.

For more information, please contact:

Amanda Rodriguez, Esq.
arodriguez@turnaroundinc.org
(410) 377-8111 (o)

or

Melanie Shapiro
mshapiro@mnadv.org
(301) 852-3930

SB 153 Rodriguez Testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Diana Beeson

Position: INFO



BILL NUMBER: SB153

TITLE: Maryland Department of Transportation - Child Exploitation and Human Trafficking Awareness, Training, and Response

COMMITTEE: JPR

HEARING DATE: January 31, 2024

POSITION: Information

TurnAround, Inc. respectfully provides the following information for consideration on this bill.

Transportation is a key resource used by survivors of trafficking to ensure safe passage from abusive situations. Survivors rely on different modes of transportation from buses, trains, subways, airports and legitimate and illegitimate taxi services and ride share programs. To a trafficking survivor, accessible transportation is safety.

This bill, as intended, provides for training, signage and protocol development for transportation employees in hopes of identifying and providing support for trafficked individuals. The nuanced nature of trafficking requires increased protections, and access to local resources. The Maryland Human Trafficking Task Force works collaboratively and across disciplines to provide a comprehensive response to the issue of trafficking in our state. The Task Force can provide training and expertise across the state and should be involved in the development and implementation of training for transportation employees.

Additionally, in protocol development, identification of survivors should be done only be done by qualified professionals that can quickly and safely provide support to survivors. Requesting support from law enforcement upon the potential identification of a trafficking survivor can lead to further harm including death of the survivor. Law enforcement is a key player in addressing human trafficking; however, their involvement must be engaged at the express request of the survivor.

This bill also requests that the National Human Trafficking Hotline be given as an additional resource; however, local providers across the state have found that this does not lead to additional support locally. Most jurisdictions have local resources that should be depended on, like local trafficking task forces, regional navigators and other victim service providers. Local resources are more apt at responding immediately and ensure the survivor is taken to safety.

About TurnAround, Inc TurnAround, Inc. is the designated rape crisis center for Baltimore City and Baltimore County, and a comprehensive domestic violence center. Crisis response, victim-centered advocacy, legal referrals, trauma therapy, and community education are core components of the agency's work. TurnAround is the designated Regional Navigator for Howard County providing services to Human Trafficking survivors. TurnAround is a member of the Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault (MCASA), Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence (MNADV) and Maryland Human Trafficking Task Force (MHTTF).

For more information, please contact:
Amanda Rodriguez, Esq.
arodriguez@turnaroundinc.org
(410) 377-8111 (o)

SB0153_Information_PSC.pdf

Uploaded by: Frederick Hoover

Position: INFO

FREDERICK H. HOOVER, JR.
CHAIR

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PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

January 29, 2024

Chair Brian J. Feldman
Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
2 West, Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: SB 153 – INFORMATION – Maryland Department of Transportation - Child Exploitation and Human Trafficking Awareness, Training and Response

Dear Chair Feldman and Committee Members:

Senate Bill 153 requires the Maryland Department of Transportation (“MDOT”) to develop or identify and implement a training program for certain transportation–sector employees, taxicab drivers, and transportation network operators (“TNOs”) on the identification and reporting of suspected child exploitation and human trafficking victims. The Maryland Public Service Commission (“PSC”) has regulatory authority over transportation companies operating for-hire within the State of Maryland. This authority requires that the Commission, in general, issue permits to companies and vehicles upon receiving documented evidence of adherence to certain criteria related to insurance standards, inspections, vehicle age, etc.

This bill would add to the Public Utilities Article (“PUA”) by requiring a driver of a taxicab or a driver for a TNO, to complete MDOT’s training program prior to obtaining or renewing a license issued by the PSC. There are approximately 58,000 licensed TNOs currently in the State. It should be noted that this bill does not include the approximately 3,350 passenger-for-hire drivers licensed by the Commission that operate sedans, limousines, and other passenger-for-hire vehicles. Further, drivers that operate commercial motor vehicles transporting sixteen or more passengers do not need a passenger-for-hire license, but only a commercial motor vehicle driver’s license with the appropriate endorsements. The Commission has no role in the approval of commercial drivers’ licenses and therefore would not be captured under this legislation.

While the proposed training is important, this bill will increase the activities of the Commission staff, requiring additional resources as well as potential changes to COMAR. To implement the requirements of the bill, the PSC would need an Administrative Specialist I position, along with funding to modify the existing database used by the PSC, in order to integrate the completion of training into each driver’s record

I appreciate the opportunity to provide information on SB 153. Please contact the Commission's Director of Legislative Affairs, Christina M. Ochoa, at christina.ochoa1@maryland.gov if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Frederick H. Hoover". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent initial 'F'.

Frederick H. Hoover, Chair
Maryland Public Service Commission

SB 153- Dept of Transportation- Human Trafficking

Uploaded by: Jane Krienke

Position: INFO



Maryland
Hospital Association

January 31, 2024

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

Re: Letter of Information - Senate Bill 153- Department of Transportation - Human Trafficking Awareness, Training and Response (See Someone, Save Someone Act)

Dear Chair Smith:

On behalf of the Maryland Hospital Association's (MHA) 62 member hospitals and health systems, we appreciate the opportunity to comment on Senate Bill 153.

Maryland's hospital employees often serve as the first line of defense to identify signs and symptoms of human trafficking.

Forensic nurse examiners (FNEs) across the state provide trauma informed care to survivors of sexual assault, abuse, neglect and interpersonal violence, and human trafficking. Most FNEs work in [hospital-based sexual assault forensic medical programs](#).

MHA partnered with the Maryland Human Trafficking Task Force's medical subcommittee and the University of Maryland SAFE Center in 2020 to update the state's [Human Trafficking: Guidelines for Health Care Providers](#). MHA also partnered with the SAFE Center to train health care providers in hospitals across the state.

Sexual assault and human trafficking are widespread in Maryland and across the country. Education on prevention, identification, and response can empower individuals so they too can serve as a line of defense. We appreciate the opportunity to provide information on Maryland hospitals' response to support human trafficking training and prevention.

For more information, please contact:

Jane Krienke, Senior Legislative Analyst, Government Affairs

Jkrienke@mhaonline.org

SB0153 - TSO - Child Exploitation and Human Traffi

Uploaded by: Patricia Westervelt

Position: INFO

January 31, 2024

The Honorable William C. Smith, Jr.
Chair, Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
2 East, Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis MD 21401

Re: *Letter of Information – Senate Bill 153 – Maryland Department of Transportation – Child Exploitation and Human Trafficking Awareness, Training, and Response*

Dear Chair Smith and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) offers the following letter of information for the Committee’s consideration on Senate Bill 153.

Senate Bill 153 would require MDOT to develop and implement a training program on the identification and reporting of suspected child exploitation and human trafficking victims. This training would be required for MDOT employees and persons employed under State contracts who work at transit stations, airports, port facilities, and highway rest stops, or provide transit services. The training would also be required for taxicab drivers and transportation network operators (TNOs). Senate Bill 153 would further require MDOT to develop signage with information and resources for child exploitation and human trafficking victims to be displayed at certain locations and requires frequent public service announcements with safety information pertaining to the subject matter.

MDOT recognizes the importance of human trafficking awareness and has implemented trainings for both MDOT employees and other transportation-sector workers. For example, at BWI Thurgood Marshall Airport, many MDOT and private employees require a MDOT-issued credential which is contingent upon completion of a video-based human trafficking training. Other training opportunities on these topics are periodically offered at other MDOT modes and by various service providers contracting with the State.

Existing MDOT employee training programs within The Secretary’s Office and each MDOT mode could be leveraged to develop and deliver mandatory, Department-wide training focused on child exploitation and human trafficking. However, the specific training video requirements enumerated in Senate Bill 153 are likely beyond MDOT’s current capabilities and would thus increase the associated time and costs of compliance. MDOT would also need to consider relevant training programs and materials available through federal agencies—including the Department of Transportation (USDOT), the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), and the Department of Justice (DOJ)—to ensure consistency with existing programs and established best practices.

The Honorable William C. Smith, Jr.
Page Two

The application of the requirements in Senate Bill 153 with respect to personnel outside the Department, may pose some challenges. Contractors doing business with the State in the environments specified, including small businesses, will be required to ensure their employees receive mandated training. Personnel costs relating to such training are unknown at this time but would be borne by those businesses, which may in turn adjust their pricing to cover those additional costs. It should also be noted that MDOT does not regulate either taxi companies or transportation network companies (TNCs) such as Uber and Lyft, which would complicate the implementation of Senate Bill 153. As such, both the delivery and tracking of training for these groups by MDOT may be challenging.

The cost to implement the requirements for posted signage, development of trainings and associated materials, public service announcements, as well as the potential liability for failing to report human trafficking could be significant.

The Maryland Department of Transportation respectfully requests the Committee consider this information during its deliberations of Senate Bill 153.

Respectfully submitted,

Pilar Helm
Director of Government Affairs
Maryland Department of Transportation
410-865-1090