

**MARYLAND JUDICIAL CONFERENCE**  
**GOVERNMENT RELATIONS AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS**

Hon. Matthew J. Fader  
Chief Justice

187 Harry S. Truman Parkway  
Annapolis, MD 21401

**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee  
**FROM:** Legislative Committee  
Suzanne D. Pelz, Esq.  
410-260-1523  
**RE:** Senate Bill 550  
Children – Labor Trafficking  
**DATE:** January 31, 2024  
(2/16)  
**POSITION:** Oppose, as drafted

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The Maryland Judiciary opposes Senate Bill 550, as drafted. This bill would amend the Courts and Judicial Proceedings Article to add labor trafficking to the CINA definition and to add instances in which a parent or guardian engages in or facilitates labor trafficking to the list of circumstances in which the court may waive DSS’s obligation to make reasonable efforts toward reunification.

The Judiciary supports the intention of the bill but has several drafting concerns. First, the definition of labor trafficking is not the same as the one found in Criminal Law, Sections 3-1201 through 3-1203, and the Judiciary believes this discrepancy could lead to confusion.

Second, the Judiciary noted a concern that the definition could be used more broadly than intended, and perhaps lead to unintended consequences. Relatedly, “force, fraud, or coercion” can be a more difficult concept when applied in the context of parents and guardians.

cc. Hon. Charles Sydnor  
Judicial Council  
Legislative Committee  
Kelley O’Connor