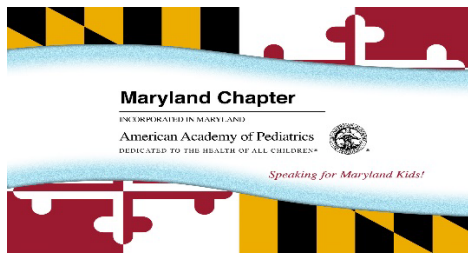


HB0763 - Senate_FAV_MDAAP_Education - Sexual Abuse

Uploaded by: Christine Krone

Position: FAV



Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

March 20, 2025

House Bill 763 – *Education – Sexual Abuse and Assault Awareness and Prevention Program –
Human and Sex Trafficking*
POSITION: SUPPORT

The Maryland Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics (MDAAP) is a statewide association representing more than 1,100 pediatricians and allied pediatric and adolescent healthcare practitioners in the State and is a strong and established advocate promoting the health and safety of all the children we serve. On behalf of MDAAP, we submit this letter of support for House Bill 763.

The bill requires the inclusion of human and sex trafficking awareness and prevention material in education programs for students in grades 6 through 8. Adolescents, particularly those in middle school, are highly vulnerable to trafficking, and early education on the signs of exploitation is crucial in empowering students to protect themselves and seek help. By integrating this content into school curricula, the bill ensures that students will have the knowledge and tools to recognize and report potential trafficking situations.

According to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, approximately one in six runaways reported to them in 2020 were likely to be victims of sex trafficking, with a significant portion of those victims being between the ages of 12 and 17 – an age range that overlaps with middle school-aged youth. Additionally, the Polaris Project, which operates the National Human Trafficking Hotline, reports that youth between the ages of 12 and 17 are particularly vulnerable to trafficking due to their increasing independence and the potential for online exploitation (National Center for Missing & Exploited Children, 2020; Polaris Project, 2021). These statistics highlight the urgent need for educational programs targeting middle school students to help prevent trafficking before it occurs. For these reasons we urge a favorable report.

For more information call:

Christine K. Krone
J. Steven Wise
Danna L. Kauffman
410-244-7000

Maryland Catholic Conference_FAV_HB763_SenateCross

Uploaded by: Diane Arias

Position: FAV



March 20, 2025

House Bill 763

**Education - Sexual Abuse and Assault Awareness and Prevention Program -
Human and Sex Trafficking
Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment 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.

House Bill 763 requires that a certain program on the awareness and prevention of sexual abuse and assault include, for students in grades 6 through 8, material promoting the awareness and prevention of human and sex trafficking.

Promoting awareness about the realities of human trafficking is essential in the fight to combat it. 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 Unfortunately, few Marylanders are aware of the presence of human trafficking in the state, leaving traffickers hidden and children more vulnerable to exploitation. Education on the awareness and prevention of human trafficking in an age-appropriate way for all students in Maryland is a crucial first step in adding more eyes and ears to anti-trafficking efforts.

At risk youth can better prepare themselves with age-appropriate education regarding human trafficking. Children in sixth through eighth grade have technology at their disposal that lends itself to dangerous situations. The average age of entry into the commercial sex trade ranges

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

between the ages of 12-14.² While they are exploring their friendships and using social media to connect, they are a prime target for human trafficking. A 2020 report indicated a 125% increase in Facebook recruitment trafficking and 95% increase of recruitment trafficking on Instagram.³ With the rise of technology exploitation, traffickers can easily connect with victims through fake profiles and establish trust before exploiting their victims in person. Age-appropriate education will allow for students to connect to the material and lead to discussion, problem solving, and meaningful activities that will allow for them to become aware of the risks and armed with tools to combat suspicious activity. The introduction of this age-appropriate education will enable youth to realize they are valued members of society and empower them to be advocates for themselves and others against human trafficking. 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."⁴

For these reasons, the Maryland Catholic Conference asks for a favorable report on **HB 763**.

Thank you for your consideration.

² https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/sites/default/files/USDOE_UseCase_HT_2017.pdf

³ <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/blog/2022/07/technologys-complicated-relationship-human-trafficking>

⁴ https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2014/april/documents/papa-francesco_20140410_tratta-persone-umane.html

HB0763 crossfile FAV - Education - Sexual Abuse an

Uploaded by: Richard KAP Kaplowitz

Position: FAV

03/20/2025

Richard Keith Kaplowitz
Frederick, MD 21703

TESTIMONY ON CROSSOVER BILL HB0763 – FAVORABLE

Education - Sexual Abuse and Assault Awareness and Prevention Program - Human and Sex Trafficking

TO: Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Wilkins and members of the Education, Energy and the Environment Committee

FROM: Richard Keith Kaplowitz

My name is Richard K. Kaplowitz. I am a resident of District 3. I am submitting this testimony in support of crossover bill HB0763, Education - Sexual Abuse and Assault Awareness and Prevention Program - Human and Sex Trafficking

House bill HB0763 was passed by the House 137-3 on 03/11/25. There is no cross-filed Senate bill.

Maryland statistics show that child sexual abuse is a problem within Maryland.¹

In 2020, there were 1,365,166 children in Maryland.¹ Of those children, 7,242 were victims of child abuse or neglect. 28.4% of the child abuse or neglect that occurred in Maryland in 2020 was sexual abuse, meaning 2,059 Maryland children experienced sexual abuse. This is an increase of 3.4% from 2019.

The percentage of victims of child sexual abuse in Maryland is significantly higher than the national average of 9%.

The Maryland Human Trafficking Task Force has reported the following:²

- Maryland Human Trafficking Task Force (MHTTF) Victim Service Subcommittee members assisted **217** victims of trafficking in 2013
- FBI Child Exploitation Task Force has identified **46** child victims of trafficking in Maryland since January 2013
- MHTTF federal law enforcement partners have identified **200** total victims of trafficking since January 2013
- MHTTF federal law enforcement partners have arrested **94** human traffickers since January 2013
- **23** federal trafficking prosecutions in Maryland since January 2013

¹ https://mcasa.org/assets/files/Incidence_of_CSA_Fact_Sheet_2021.12.pdf

² <https://www.mdhumantrafficking.org/statistics>

HB0763_RichardKaplowitz_FAV

The intent of this bill is to equip our youth with the knowledge needed to, on an age appropriate basis, understand what the problem is and how to recognize it so they can avoid becoming victims to this plague on our society.

This bill establishes an educational framework that requires that a certain program on the awareness and prevention of sexual abuse and assault include, for students in grades 6 through 8, material promoting the awareness and prevention of human and sex trafficking.

We can and must proactively work to equip our children with tools, so they do not fall victim to these scourges. The consequences of inaction to arrest these problems are too terrible to contemplate.

I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on crossover bill HB0763.

Trafficking - education - house in senate testimon

Uploaded by: Lisae C Jordan

Position: FWA



Working to end sexual violence in Maryland

P.O. Box 8782
Silver Spring, MD 20907
Phone: 301-565-2277
Fax: 301-565-3619

For more information contact:
Lisae C. Jordan, Esquire
443-995-5544
www.mcasa.org

Testimony Supporting House Bill 763 with Amendments
Lisae C. Jordan, Executive Director & Counsel
March 20, 2025

The Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault (MCASA) is a non-profit membership organization that includes the State's seventeen rape crisis centers, law enforcement, mental health and health care providers, attorneys, educators, survivors of sexual violence and other concerned individuals. MCASA includes the Sexual Assault Legal Institute (SALI), a statewide legal services provider for survivors of sexual assault. MCASA represents the unified voice and combined energy of all of its members working to eliminate sexual violence. We urge the Education, Energy & Environment Committee to report favorably on House Bill 763 with Amendments

House Bill 763

Sexual Abuse & Assault Awareness and Prevention Program, Human and Sex Trafficking

This bill adds education about "human and sex trafficking" to the currently mandated curricula on awareness and prevention of sexual abuse and assault. The current mandate provides broad guidance at the state level, with additional community specific information developed locally. MCASA and many of its member rape crisis centers across the state have been involved in developing the current sexual abuse and assault prevention curricula; notably, this generally also includes information on consent.

Providing students with information regarding trafficking is an important component of prevention. Stopping the horrific crimes of trafficking must continue to be the responsibility of adults, not children, however education can help empower children and promote resilience. Including age-appropriate information regarding sex trafficking would fit well in current curricula regarding sexual abuse and assault and regarding consent. It is less clear whether labor trafficking would fit into this education and MCASA encourages the Committee to provide local schools flexibility on this point. Additionally, we express concern at limiting the trafficking education to students between 6th and 8th grade. These are smaller details, however, and MCASA fully supports HB763's larger goal of ensuring that students receive information about sex trafficking as part of their education. MCASA also supports the bill provisions requiring that teachers providing this education have the training they need to be effective, and notes that MCASA and other agencies are available to assist with efforts to train educators.

**The Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault urges the
Education, Energy & Environment Committee to
report favorably on House Bill 763 with Amendments**

HB0763 OPPOSE.pdf

Uploaded by: Grace Wilson

Position: UNF



**HB763 – EDUCATION – SEXUAL ABUSE AND ASSAULT AWARENESS AND PREVENTION
PROGRAM – HUMAN AND SEX TRAFFICKING**

March 20, 2025

EDUCATION, ENERGY, AND THE ENVIRONMENT

OPPOSE

Grace Wilson, Senior Legislative & Policy Specialist (410.440.1758)

Anne Arundel County Public Schools (AACPS) opposes **HB763 – Education – Sexual Abuse and Assault Awareness and Prevention Program – Human and Sex Trafficking**. This bill requires the State Board of Education and each nonpublic school in the State to develop and implement a program of age-appropriate education on the awareness of prevention of sexual abuse and assault that includes, for students in grades 6 through 8, material promoting the awareness of human and sex trafficking.

While this legislation is well-intentioned, AACPS opposes efforts by the General Assembly to legislate local public-school curriculum or assessments. Attempts to legislate curriculum only weaken the effectiveness of the entire educational program contrary to the interests of our students and obligations of school systems. The authority to establish curriculum and assessments is the domain of the State Board of Education and the local boards of education, the same entities charged with the responsibility to research, investigate, and evaluate both curriculum and assessments. Maintaining this authority with the State Board and local boards allows local boards of education to collaborate with the State and stakeholders to ensure that all students, schools, and school systems are held accountable.

Maryland public schools provide their students with a comprehensive Pre-K – 12 health education curriculum that focuses on a student's development of protective life skills and promotes health and well-being. As part of this comprehensive health education curriculum, students are educated in Family Life and Human Sexuality as well as Safety and Violence Prevention. Students participate in age-appropriate instruction on the awareness and prevention of sexual abuse and assault. This instruction includes age-appropriate instruction on the meaning of consent and respect for personal boundaries. Safety and Violence Prevention is one of six core concepts that is part of the comprehensive skills-based health education program in grades 6-8.

Accordingly, AACPS respectfully requests an **UNFAVORABLE** committee report on HB763.

HB0763- State Board- Oppose- Crossover.pdf

Uploaded by: Madeline Houck

Position: UNF

TO: Senate Committee on Education, Energy, and the Environment

BILL: House Bill 0763- Education - Sexual Abuse and Assault Awareness and Prevention Program - Human and Sex Trafficking

DATE: March 18, 2025

POSITION: Oppose

The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) and the State Board of Education respectfully oppose **HB 763**, which would require Maryland's Local Education Agencies (LEAs) and non-public schools that receive textbook and technology grants to incorporate instructional materials for students in grades 6 through 8 that promote the awareness of human and sex trafficking in their health education curriculum.

We do not oppose this legislation based on the grounds that the legislative requirement would be duplicative of current regulatory requirements and run counter to the process that is entrusted to the Maryland State Board of Education (State Board), MSDE, and LEAs.

The State Board and MSDE have a structured and collaborative process for reviewing, revising, and adopting standards, frameworks, and curricular resources was reaffirmed on January 23, 2024. This process ensures that all curriculum updates are evidence-based, age-appropriate, and developed in collaboration between the State Board, MSDE, the Maryland Department of Health, LEAs, and community members through the Standards and Frameworks Validation Committee (SFVC).

As part of this process, the Comprehensive Health Education SFVC began its review of the Comprehensive Health Education Framework in July 2024. HB 763 would disrupt this established process, creating unnecessary redundancies and potentially delaying the scheduled updates.

Additionally, the established Comprehensive Health Education Framework, aligned with the 2nd edition of the National Health Education Standards, addresses age-appropriate topics related to sexual mistreatment, grooming, harassment, abuse, assault, exploitation, and human trafficking. Moreover, compliance with the framework is enforced through COMAR 13A.04.18.02, which requires local superintendents to certify that health education instruction meets, at a minimum, the requirements of the Comprehensive Health Education Framework.

We respectfully request that you consider this information as you deliberate **HB 763**. Please contact Akilah Alleyne, Ph.D. (Executive Director of Government Affairs) akilah.alleyne@maryland.gov for any additional information.

HB 763- xover - Education - Sexual Abuse and Assau

Uploaded by: Nia Callender

Position: UNF



Mary Pat Fannon, Executive Director
1217 S. Potomac Street
Baltimore, MD 21224
410-935-7281
marypat.fannon@pssam.org

BILL: HB 763

TITLE: Education - Sexual Abuse and Assault Awareness and Prevention Program
- Human and Sex Trafficking

DATE: March 20, 2025

POSITION: Unfavorable

COMMITTEE: Senate Education, Energy and the Environment Committee

CONTACT: Mary Pat Fannon, Executive Director, PSSAM

The Public School Superintendents' Association of Maryland (PSSAM), on behalf of all twenty-four local school superintendents **opposes** House Bill 763.

This bill requires that the State Board and each nonpublic school in the State shall develop and implement a program of age-appropriate education on the awareness and prevention of sexual abuse and assault. The program shall be taught by a teacher who is trained to provide instruction on the awareness of sexual abuse and assault and be incorporated into the health curriculum of each county board and each nonpublic school. It also includes for students in grades 6 through 8, material promoting the awareness and prevention of human and sex trafficking. This act shall take effect July 1, 2025.

Local superintendents strongly support robust and comprehensive instruction in age-appropriate health education, including topics covered in this legislation, and believe that the intent of this bill is already being met.

According to the MSDE, comprehensive health education has been a feature of Maryland education regulation since 1970. In this framework, concepts and skills related to family life and human sexuality must be age-appropriate and taught by teachers who have had additional preparation in the content and teaching methods of the material. New health education standards were adopted by the Maryland State Board of Education in December 2019 and the [Maryland State Framework for Comprehensive Health Education](#) was revised based on those standards.

This framework was created by the State Board and MSDE in partnership with the Maryland Department of Health, LEAs, national experts, and stakeholders to rigorously review, revise, and adopt standards, frameworks, and curricular resources. *The updated grade 7 standards require students to analyze laws, policies, and consequences related to sexual mistreatment, grooming, harassment, abuse, assault, exploitation, and human trafficking that are designed to protect young people.* Further, while the grade 6 and 8 indicators do not explicitly reference "human and sex trafficking," terms such as sexual mistreatment, grooming, harassment, abuse, assault, exploitation, and boundary violations *were intentionally chosen to provide age-appropriate instruction on these issues.*

Some local school districts have incorporated the topics mentioned above in curricula at all three levels and have included human trafficking specifically in middle school curriculum for several years. Rather than imposing mandates on the teaching of human and sex trafficking awareness, local superintendents support program guidance from the MSDE.

Again, while we appreciate the bill's good intention, we ask the Committee to continue to honor the well-established and balanced relationship between the state and local education experts on the creation of standards, and implementation of local curriculum.

For these reasons, PSSAM **opposes** House Bill 763 and kindly requests an **unfavorable** report.

HB 763- xover - Education - Sexual Abuse and Assau

Uploaded by: Nia Callender

Position: UNF



Mary Pat Fannon, Executive Director
1217 S. Potomac Street
Baltimore, MD 21224
410-935-7281
marypat.fannon@pssam.org

BILL: HB 763

TITLE: Education - Sexual Abuse and Assault Awareness and Prevention Program
- Human and Sex Trafficking

DATE: March 20, 2025

POSITION: Unfavorable

COMMITTEE: Senate Education, Energy and the Environment Committee

CONTACT: Mary Pat Fannon, Executive Director, PSSAM

The Public School Superintendents' Association of Maryland (PSSAM), on behalf of all twenty-four local school superintendents **opposes** House Bill 763.

This bill requires that the State Board and each nonpublic school in the State shall develop and implement a program of age-appropriate education on the awareness and prevention of sexual abuse and assault. The program shall be taught by a teacher who is trained to provide instruction on the awareness of sexual abuse and assault and be incorporated into the health curriculum of each county board and each nonpublic school. It also includes for students in grades 6 through 8, material promoting the awareness and prevention of human and sex trafficking. This act shall take effect July 1, 2025.

Local superintendents strongly support robust and comprehensive instruction in age-appropriate health education, including topics covered in this legislation, and believe that the intent of this bill is already being met.

According to the MSDE, comprehensive health education has been a feature of Maryland education regulation since 1970. In this framework, concepts and skills related to family life and human sexuality must be age-appropriate and taught by teachers who have had additional preparation in the content and teaching methods of the material. New health education standards were adopted by the Maryland State Board of Education in December 2019 and the [Maryland State Framework for Comprehensive Health Education](#) was revised based on those standards.

This framework was created by the State Board and MSDE in partnership with the Maryland Department of Health, LEAs, national experts, and stakeholders to rigorously review, revise, and adopt standards, frameworks, and curricular resources. *The updated grade 7 standards require students to analyze laws, policies, and consequences related to sexual mistreatment, grooming, harassment, abuse, assault, exploitation, and human trafficking that are designed to protect young people.* Further, while the grade 6 and 8 indicators do not explicitly reference "human and sex trafficking," terms such as sexual mistreatment, grooming, harassment, abuse, assault, exploitation, and boundary violations *were intentionally chosen to provide age-appropriate instruction on these issues.*

Some local school districts have incorporated the topics mentioned above in curricula at all three levels and have included human trafficking specifically in middle school curriculum for several years. Rather than imposing mandates on the teaching of human and sex trafficking awareness, local superintendents support program guidance from the MSDE.

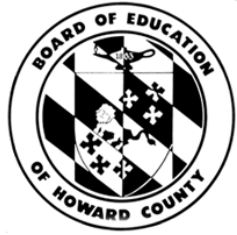
Again, while we appreciate the bill's good intention, we ask the Committee to continue to honor the well-established and balanced relationship between the state and local education experts on the creation of standards, and implementation of local curriculum.

For these reasons, PSSAM **opposes** House Bill 763 and kindly requests an **unfavorable** report.

HB0763 Howard Co BOE Testimony 032025 for EEE - Se

Uploaded by: Staff Howard County

Position: UNF



**Board of Education
of Howard County**

Jolene Mosley, *Chair*

Linfeng Chen, Ph.D., *Vice Chair*

Andrea Chamblee, Esq.

Jennifer Swickard Mallo

Jacky McCoy

Meg Ricks

Antonia Watts

James Obasiolu
Student Member

William J. Barnes
*Superintendent,
Secretary/Treasurer*

**Board of Education of Howard County
Testimony Submitted to the Maryland Senate,
Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
March 20, 2025**

HB0763: UNFAVORABLE

Education - Sexual Abuse and Assault Awareness and Prevention Program - Human and Sex Trafficking

The Board of Education of Howard County (the Board) opposes **Education - Sexual Abuse and Assault Awareness and Prevention Program - Human and Sex Trafficking** as a mandate on local school system curriculum.

While well-intentioned, HB0763 mandates the content of Health Education curriculum, by requiring that a program of age-appropriate education on the awareness and prevention of sexual abuse and assault include material promoting the awareness and prevention of human and sex trafficking in grades 6 through 8. As a legislative platform the Board supports local decision making in the development of curriculum that accounts for a balance of educational practices, available resources, public input, and accountability that is informed and guided by State Board established standards and models, rather than legislative mandates as encompassed in HB0763.

The Howard County Public School System (HCPSS) provides a comprehensive Health Education program that aligns to State curriculum standards and focuses on a student's development of protective life skills and promotes health and well-being. Topics such as sexual mistreatment, grooming, harassment, abuse, assault, and exploitation are currently included in HCPSS curriculum at all three levels. While Howard County has included human trafficking specifically in middle school curriculum for several years, it was also recently added to the [Maryland Comprehensive Health Education Framework](#) in grade 7.

For these reasons, we urge an UNFAVORABLE report on HB0763 from this Committee.

Written Testimony for HB 763_ Education - Sexual

Uploaded by: Trudy Tibbals

Position: UNF

Written Testimony for **HB 763: Education - Sexual Abuse and Assault Awareness and Prevention Program - Human and Sex Trafficking -**
Please **VOTE NO** on this bill.

Dear Education, Energy and the Environment Committee:

This bill reads "...Requiring that a certain program on the awareness and prevention of sexual abuse and assault include, for students in **grades 6 through 8**, material promoting the awareness and prevention of human and sex trafficking; and generally relating to human and sex trafficking awareness and prevention programs in **public and nonpublic schools**. ..."

I understand the intention of this bill. While I can appreciate the bill's many sponsors' intention to try to warn our children of the dangers of human and sex trafficking and sexual abuse and assault, I'm not in agreement that our public and nonpublic schools are the place to accomplish this objective.

Firstly, grades 6-8 are generally equivalent to ages 11-13. These are very impressionable ages. Are these children too young to be learning this information? There is a strong possibility that this information will cause extreme upset, anxiety, and depression and other mental health conditions in children of these ages. Are schools and the State willing to accept responsibility and **liability** for causing these extremely distressing emotions and mental conditions in our children?

Secondly, this is another program that will be **added** to our already overburdened schools. Where will we get the money to pay for this **additional** program? There is no mention in this bill about where the **funding** for this program will come from. Also, the bill indicates that this program must be "BE TAUGHT by a teacher who is **trained** to provide instruction on the awareness and prevention of sexual abuse and assault". Where is this training going to come from? Within the school system or an outside vendor that specializes in training? Who is going to **pay** for the training for this teacher?

Thirdly, there may be many parents that will be against this program being taught to their children, just like some parents are against their children being taught any sexual subjects at school. The constitution says that parents have the right to take charge of their children's education. The bill states that the program will "...BE INCORPORATED into the **health curriculum** of each county board and each nonpublic school..." Yet there is no mention of an "opt-out" option for parents!! If this is incorporated into the health curriculum, what part of the health curriculum? Will it be incorporated into the Family Life and Sexual Education portion of the health curriculum, where parents may

choose to “**opt-out**” their children? Some parents have very strong convictions that these topics should be covered in the home and that they, as parents, should be the “teachers” of this information to their children. And their convictions should be respected!!

Lastly, who is going to provide the curriculum, and the “material” for this information? Are schools going to create the curriculum and “materials” directly, or are the school systems going to have to pay for an outside vendor to create this curriculum and “materials”? If there is an outside vendor that creates this curriculum and “materials”, will the parents be given the right and the opportunity to review this outside curriculum and “materials” and give their feedback? How is the State going to make sure that the information is age-appropriate (as is one of the stipulations of this bill)?

There are too many questions about this bill that have not been answered. And these are extremely important questions that need to be addressed!!

Therefore, please **VOTE NO** on this bill. Our children are precious and may not have the emotional ability to handle this information.

Thank you for your courtesy, attention and cooperation.

Respectfully,

Trudy Tibbals

A Very Concerned Mother of 3 and Maryland Resident