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MAYOR

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HB1

January 24, 2025

TO: Members of the Environment and Transportation Committee

FROM: Nina Themelis, Director of Mayor's Office of Government Relations

RE: House Bill 0001 – Department of Transportation – Human Trafficking Awareness, Training, and Response (**See Someone, Save Someone Act**)

POSITION: Support

Chair Korman, Vice Chair Boyce, and Members of the Committee, please be advised that the Baltimore City Administration (BCA) **supports** House Bill (HB) 1.

HB 1 requires the Maryland Department of Transportation to train certain transportation sector employees on the identification and reporting of suspected human trafficking victims. Training is vital because human trafficking often occurs in public spaces where transportation employees interact with potential victims. This training can help to identify and stop human trafficking and child exploitation, thus saving and changing lives. This bill also includes liability protections, which will encourage proactive reporting, fostering a culture of vigilance and support for victims.

The City of Baltimore has seen higher rates of victim identification through increased trainings for public service employees and the posting of signage displaying the National Human Trafficking Hotline in locations such as hotel rooms and rest stops. Victims of human trafficking and child exploitation, in Baltimore City and beyond, are often forced to travel to and from locations via buses. Public transit offers traffickers low-cost travel options as well as the ability to go undetected by enforcement officers. Transportation sector employees are uniquely positioned to recognize signs of distress or suspicious behavior that may indicate trafficking. With proper training, they can become vigilant victim advocates, providing timely assistance and intervention.

For these reasons, the BCA respectfully request a **favorable** report on HB 1.