## HB0001 Human Trafficking Awareness, Training, and Uploaded by: Catherine OMalley



phone 410-321-8761 fax 410-321-0462 www.wlcmd.org

BILL NO:	House Bill 0001
TITLE:	Human Trafficking Awareness, Training, and Response
	(See Someone, Save Someone Act)
COMMITTEE:	Environment and Transportation
HEARING DATE:	January 24, 2025
POSITION:	SUPPORT

House Bill 0001 requires the Department of Transportation to develop and implement a training program for transportation sector employees on the identification and reporting of suspected human trafficking victims. This is a critical step forward in addressing the pervasive issue of human trafficking, which disproportionately impacts women and girls, particularly from marginalized communities.

By mandating the Maryland Department of Transportation to create a training program for transportation employees, HB0001 ensures that those with public-facing and high-traffic roles —such as drivers, station personnel, and security staff—are not only aware of the signs of trafficking but also understand their legal and ethical obligations to intervene and report. The requirement for training to be completed annually and within 90 days of hiring ensures that the workforce remains vigilant and educated on the latest methods of trafficking, which frequently evolve. Furthermore, HB0001 removes civil and criminal liability for reporting suspected trafficking, which provides critical legal protection for those who take action in good faith, ensuring that employees are not deterred by fear of repercussions.

Engagement at truck stops is a good example of how DoT employees can reduce the likelihood that vulnerable individuals, including runaway children, become easy targets for trafficking. These locations offer a degree of privacy, making it easier for traffickers to exploit their victims. While the majority of the trucking industry is not involved in sex trafficking, there are consumers who drive this illicit trade.

This bill addresses these alarming practices by mandating training for those working in the transportation sector to help them identify, report, and prevent human trafficking. HB0001 recognizes the structural power imbalances that allow trafficking to flourish and seeks to empower ordinary citizens—specifically those working in transportation—to be proactive agents in combating this common form of gender-based violence. By mandating training and establishing clear reporting mechanisms, the bill fosters a culture of accountability and care, where the safety and dignity of women and vulnerable individuals are prioritized.

In sum, HB0001 is not only a necessary measure to combat human trafficking but a critical tool to prevent exploitation, protect survivors, and create safer communities for all.

The Women's Law Center of Maryland is a private, non-profit, legal services organization that serves as a leading voice for justice and fairness for women. It advocates for the rights of women through legal assistance to individuals and strategic initiatives to achieve systemic change, working to ensure physical safety, economic security, and bodily autonomy for women in Maryland.

## CE Ball 2024 - Support- HB 1 See Someone Save Some Uploaded by: County Executive Calvin Ball

HOWARD COUNTY OFFICE OF COUNTY EXECUTIVE

3430 Courthouse Drive Ellicott City, Maryland 21043 410-313-2013 Voice/Relay



Calvin Ball Howard County Executive cball@howardcountymd.gov www.howardcountymd.gov FAX 410-313-3051

January 24, 2025

Delegate Marc Korman, Chair House Environment and Transportation Committee 251 Taylor House Office Building Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Re: **TESTIMONY OF SUPPORT**: HB 1- Department of Transportation - Human Trafficking Awareness, Training, and Response (See Someone, Save Someone Act)

Dear Chair Korman, Vice Chair Boyce, and Members of the Environment and Transportation Committee,

I commend Delegate Ebersole for his consistent advocacy and introduction of House Bill 1. This bill would require the Maryland Department of Transportation to develop and implement a training program on the identification and reporting of suspected human trafficking victims.

Like all jurisdictions in Maryland, Howard County has seen the impact of human trafficking in our community. From October 1, 2020, to September 30, 2024, our Office of Human Trafficking Prevention (OHTP) has identified and served a total of 107 victims of sex and labor trafficking.

We will continue to meet trafficking victims with comprehensive services and a seamless, coordinated support system. Through our agencies and community partners, we help victims through traumainformed counseling and legal services while also connecting them with health care, safe housing, and safety planning resources. In 2024 alone, our Howard County Police Department recovered 22 victims from sex trafficking operations, some of which were juveniles.

We understand that Howard County is not immune to this issue. Which is why in my first year as County Executive, we introduced legislation that permanently established the Howard County Human Trafficking Prevention Coordination Council (HTPCC). Both HTPCC and OHTP's work align with the mission and vision of the Maryland Human Trafficking Task Force and other stakeholders working to prevent and ultimately eliminate human trafficking in any form.

Since their conception, OHTP and HTPCC have prioritized educational presentations to local community groups with introductory sessions on sex and labor trafficking and available local resources. This outreach focuses on groups most at risk for trafficking, including H2A and H2B visa holders.

These teams also hold confidential quarterly case review meetings to review adult sex and any labor trafficking cases as well as credible tips. Moving forward OHTP and HTPCC will continue to expend partnerships with county agencies, immigrant-focused groups and service organizations, key faith and community organizers and groups, businesses, and business organizations to ensure that members of our community are aware of their rights and available resources.

### HOWARD COUNTY OFFICE OF COUNTY EXECUTIVE

3430 Courthouse Drive 
Ellicott City, Maryland 21043 
410-313-2013 Voice/Relay



Calvin Ball Howard County Executive cball@howardcountymd.gov www.howardcountymd.gov FAX 410-313-3051

The passage of House Bill 1 would exponentially expand the number of trained individuals with the skills to identify potential trafficking victims. Furthermore, by prioritizing training for employees in transit stations, airports, ports, and rest stops, this bill ensures these skills flow to employees in some of the most high-risk areas for trafficking.

It is critical that we take the action's necessary to combat human trafficking, and this bill is a bold step towards protecting victims and winning the fight. I welcome your support and respectfully request a favorable report on House Bill 1.

All the Best,

Calvin Ball Howard County Executive

## HB1\_Women's Caucus\_FAV Uploaded by: Delegate Dana Jones

Del. Dana Jones, District 30A President

Del. Michele Guyton, District 42B 1st Vice-President

Del. Jennifer White Holland, District 10 2nd Vice-President

Del. Sarah Wolek, District 16 Secretary



Del. Linda Foley, District 15 *Treasurer* 

Del. Karen R. Toles, District 25 Parliamentarian

Del. Jacqueline T. Addison, District 45 At Large

> Del. Kym Taylor, District 23 *At Large*

#### WOMEN LEGISLATORS OF MARYLAND THE MARYLAND GENERAL ASSEMBLY

January 28, 2025

To: Delegate Marc Korman, Chair Delegate Regina T. Boyce, Vice Chair Members of the Environment and Transportation Committee

The Maryland Women's Caucus is proud to express our **unanimous support for HB 1: Districting - Department of Transportation – Human Trafficking Awareness, Training (See Someone, Save Someone Act).** This vital piece of legislation trains Department of Transportation employees to recognize the signs of human trafficking and equips them with the knowledge and tools to take appropriate action.

Human trafficking is a heinous crime that disproportionately impacts women and girls, accounting for a significant majority of trafficking victims globally and domestically. Traffickers exploit vulnerabilities, using coercion, manipulation, and violence to trap individuals in a cycle of abuse. Maryland, with its location along major transportation routes and proximity to international airports, is particularly susceptible to human trafficking activity.

By providing targeted training to Department of Transportation employees—the individuals most likely to encounter trafficking victims at critical transit points—we can significantly enhance our ability to identify and intervene in these cases. HB 1 represents a proactive, compassionate step toward combating human trafficking in Maryland and protecting some of our most vulnerable residents.

We respectfully urge the Environment and Transportation Committee to issue a **favorable report** for HB 1. Together, we can ensure Maryland remains at the forefront of efforts to end human trafficking and protect the dignity and rights of all individuals in our state.

Thank you for your consideration and for your commitment to improving the lives of Maryland's residents.

# Maryland Catholic Conference\_FAV\_HB1.pdf Uploaded by: Diane Arias



### January 24, 2025

### House Bill 1 Department of Transportation - Human Trafficking Awareness, Training, and Response (See Someone, Save Someone Act) House Environment and Transportation 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 1** requires the Maryland Department of Transportation to develop or identify and implement a training program for transportation sector employees on the identification and reporting of suspected human trafficking victims; requiring transportation sector employers to certify by January 1, 2026, and each year thereafter that certain employees have completed the training program; requiring new employees to receive training within 90 days of hiring; removing civil and criminal liability for reporting of suspected trafficking.

The MCC supports this bill because it emphasizes the importance of training programs to educate individuals in the transportation sector on how to identify and report human trafficking. Such training is critical for reducing the prevalence of trafficking, aiding law enforcement in their efforts to combat this crime and increasing public awareness about how to assist in the fight against trafficking.

Maryland's central location makes it a significant hub for human trafficking, serving as both a pass-through state and a destination for traffickers. Traffickers frequently utilize Maryland's extensive transportation network, including major highways like Interstate 95, to connect victims to large East Coast cities such as New York, Baltimore, Philadelphia, and Washington, D.C. Incidents of sex trafficking have been identified at Maryland truck stops, with data from the National Human Trafficking Resource Center indicating that approximately 70% of trafficking cases in the U.S. occur at truck stops.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> http://www.mdhumantrafficking.org/maryland

Recent cases illustrate how transportation hubs facilitate trafficking. For example, in a 2024 case in Maryland, a trafficker recruited women in Hagerstown transported them across Maryland to Baltimore and exploited them in hotels near BWI Marshall Airport and local stadiums.<sup>2</sup> These examples underscore the critical need for targeted training and awareness initiatives. Pope Francis has repeatedly condemned the atrocity of human trafficking, calling it "an open wound on the body of contemporary society, a scourge upon the body of Christ."<sup>3</sup> This bill is a significant step forward in addressing the exploitation of vulnerable individuals by equipping key sectors with the tools to recognize and prevent trafficking. It represents a meaningful contribution to the fight against child exploitation and human trafficking in Maryland.

For these reasons, the Maryland Catholic Conference asks for a favorable report on HB 1.

Thank you for your consideration.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> https://mcasa.org/news/post/maryland-sex-trafficking-case-shows-typical-red-flags-for-exploitation-expe <sup>3</sup> https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2014/april/documents/papa-francesco\_20140410\_trattapersone-umane.html

## HB1\_Laure Ruth\_FAV Uploaded by: Laure Ruth



BILL NO:	House Bill 1
TITLE:	Department of Transportation – Human Trafficking Awareness, Training,
	and Response (See Someone, Save Someone Act)
COMMITTEE:	Environment and Transportation
HEARING DATE:	January 24, 2025
POSITION:	SUPPORT

The Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence (MNADV) is the state domestic violence coalition that brings together victim service providers, allied professionals, and concerned individuals for the common purpose of reducing intimate partner and family violence and its harmful effects on our citizens. **MNADV urges the COMMITTEE to favorably Report on HB1.** 

House Bill 1 requires the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT), in consultation with stakeholders, to develop or identify and implement a training program that includes a curriculum on the identification and reporting of suspected human trafficking. MDOT would be required to establish a human trafficking reporting process, to provide training to its employees within certain time periods and certify such training has occurred. It must also establish a human trafficking prevention policy as well as offer public service information as it is able.

Maryland's location on the I-95 corridor makes it a part of the broad human trafficking that occurs on the eastern seaboard. A program that increases awareness of and trains about prevention of human trafficking is important. Employees of MDOT should have the tools to recognize suspected human trafficking and have a policy for what to do if they suspect it. Other agencies in Maryland are required to do this and it makes sense for MDOT to as well.

For the above stated reasons, the Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence urges a favorable report on HB1.

## HB0001 1:30:2025 Written Testimony .pdf Uploaded by: Lynn Mortoro



### **TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB0001**

Department of Transportation Human Trafficking Awareness, Training, and Response (See Someone, Save Someone Act)

### FAVORABLE

### HEARING DATE: JANUARY 30, 2025

**TO:** Chair Delegate Marc Korman, Vice Chair Delegate Regina T. Boyce and all Members of the Environment and Transportation Committee.

### FROM: Lynn R. Mortoro, member of the Maryland Episcopal Public Policy Network. (MEPPN)

**DATE**: January 30, 2025

Chair Delegate Korman, Vice Chair Delegate Boyce and Members of the Environment and Transportation Committee.

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony in favor of SB0007.

The position of the Episcopal Church is that it is time to end human trafficking. The Church has long supported legislation which aims to combat human trafficking. The training of people who are in positions to observe and report possible victims absolutely falls into the category of helping to end this nightmare for so many victims, most of whom are women and children.

The Diocese of Maryland requests a favorable report.



The Diocese of Maryland requests a

report

4 E UNIVERSITY PARKWAY, BALTIMORE, MD 21218-2437 Tel: 410-467-1399 / 800-443-1399 Fax: 410-554-6387 WWW.EpiscopalMaryland.org

# CE Ball 2024 - Support- HB 1 See Someone Save Some Uploaded by: Maureen Evans

HOWARD COUNTY OFFICE OF COUNTY EXECUTIVE

3430 Courthouse Drive Ellicott City, Maryland 21043 410-313-2013 Voice/Relay



Calvin Ball Howard County Executive cball@howardcountymd.gov www.howardcountymd.gov FAX 410-313-3051

January 24, 2025

Delegate Marc Korman, Chair House Environment and Transportation Committee 251 Taylor House Office Building Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Re: **TESTIMONY OF SUPPORT**: HB 1- Department of Transportation - Human Trafficking Awareness, Training, and Response (See Someone, Save Someone Act)

Dear Chair Korman, Vice Chair Boyce, and Members of the Environment and Transportation Committee,

I commend Delegate Ebersole for his consistent advocacy and introduction of House Bill 1. This bill would require the Maryland Department of Transportation to develop and implement a training program on the identification and reporting of suspected human trafficking victims.

Like all jurisdictions in Maryland, Howard County has seen the impact of human trafficking in our community. From October 1, 2020, to September 30, 2024, our Office of Human Trafficking Prevention (OHTP) has identified and served a total of 107 victims of sex and labor trafficking.

We will continue to meet trafficking victims with comprehensive services and a seamless, coordinated support system. Through our agencies and community partners, we help victims through traumainformed counseling and legal services while also connecting them with health care, safe housing, and safety planning resources. In 2024 alone, our Howard County Police Department recovered 22 victims from sex trafficking operations, some of which were juveniles.

We understand that Howard County is not immune to this issue. Which is why in my first year as County Executive, we introduced legislation that permanently established the Howard County Human Trafficking Prevention Coordination Council (HTPCC). Both HTPCC and OHTP's work align with the mission and vision of the Maryland Human Trafficking Task Force and other stakeholders working to prevent and ultimately eliminate human trafficking in any form.

Since their conception, OHTP and HTPCC have prioritized educational presentations to local community groups with introductory sessions on sex and labor trafficking and available local resources. This outreach focuses on groups most at risk for trafficking, including H2A and H2B visa holders.

These teams also hold confidential quarterly case review meetings to review adult sex and any labor trafficking cases as well as credible tips. Moving forward OHTP and HTPCC will continue to expend partnerships with county agencies, immigrant-focused groups and service organizations, key faith and community organizers and groups, businesses, and business organizations to ensure that members of our community are aware of their rights and available resources.

### HOWARD COUNTY OFFICE OF COUNTY EXECUTIVE

3430 Courthouse Drive 
Ellicott City, Maryland 21043 
410-313-2013 Voice/Relay



Calvin Ball Howard County Executive cball@howardcountymd.gov www.howardcountymd.gov FAX 410-313-3051

The passage of House Bill 1 would exponentially expand the number of trained individuals with the skills to identify potential trafficking victims. Furthermore, by prioritizing training for employees in transit stations, airports, ports, and rest stops, this bill ensures these skills flow to employees in some of the most high-risk areas for trafficking.

It is critical that we take the action's necessary to combat human trafficking, and this bill is a bold step towards protecting victims and winning the fight. I welcome your support and respectfully request a favorable report on House Bill 1.

All the Best,

Calvin Ball Howard County Executive

HB1-ET-SUPP.pdf Uploaded by: Nina Themelis Position: FAV



#### BRANDON M. SCOTT MAYOR

Office of Government Relations 88 State Circle Annapolis, Maryland 21401

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.

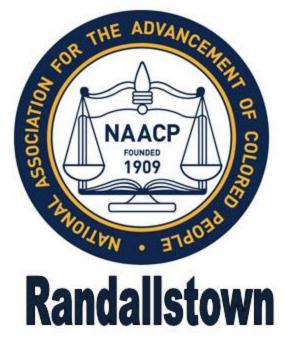
HB 1 requires the Maryland Department of Transportation to train certain transportation sector employees on the identification and reporting of suspected human trafficking victims. Training is vital because human trafficking often occurs in public spaces where transportation employees interact with potential 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 **<u>favorable</u>** report on HB 1.

Annapolis – phone: 410.269.0207 • fax: 410.269.6785 Baltimore – phone: 410.396.3497 • fax: 410.396.5136 https://mogr.baltimorecity.gov/ HB1

**HB 0001 Support.pdf** Uploaded by: Ryan Coleman Position: FAV



### Po Box 731 Randallstown, MD 21133

January 22, 2025

Environment and Transportation Committee 250 Taylor House Office Building 251 Taylor House Office Building Annapolis, Maryland 21401

### **RE: SUPPORT HB 0001, Department of Transportation - Human Trafficking Awareness, Training, and Response (See Someone, Save Someone Act)**

Dear Chair Gorman, Vice Chair Boyce and Members of the Environment and Transportation Committee

The Randallstown NAACP is a 500 member branch located in Baltimore County. Maryland. We have members in Baltimore County and Baltimore City. One of primary focuses is ensuring the quality of life for all residents in Baltimore County free of discrimination. The Randallstown NAACP supports HB 0001, Department of Transportation -Human Trafficking Awareness, Training, and Response (See Someone, Save Someone Act)

Human trafficking is a form of modern-day slavery that occurs every day in the United States, including in Maryland. In 2021, the National Human Trafficking Resource Center identified 751 reports of human trafficking, with Maryland having the 13th highest signal volume in the country. Of these reports, 279 came directly from trafficking survivors and only 16 came from medical professionals.

Human Trafficking is an issue in Baltimore County at the following hotels: Howard Johnson Pikesville, Ramada- Pikesville, Ramada Catonsville, Six Motel Catonsville, Rodeway Inn Security, Quality Inn Security, Red Roof Inn Security, Super 8 Security. The branch with Baltimore County Police And Baltimore government to fight human trafficking. We need more tools to fight this war. We need more individuals that can identify human trafficking. HB 0001 gives us another tool to win this war.

### The Randallstown Branch of the NAACP urges a favorable report from the committee on HB 0001.

yours

Ryan Coleman President, Randallstown NAACP <u>https://randnaacp.org/</u> <u>https://www.facebook.com/NAACPrandallstown</u> <u>https://www.instagram.com/naacprandallstown</u>

**UMSWASC Testimony - HB 1.pdf** Uploaded by: UM SWASC Position: FAV



### **TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF BILL HB 1**

Department of Transportation – Human Trafficking Awareness, Training, and Response (See Someone, Save Someone Act) Environment and Transportation Committee January 22, 2025

**Social Work Advocates for Social Change strongly supports HB 1,** which requires the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) to implement a training program for transportation sector employees to identify and report suspected human trafficking victims. This vital legislation is a powerful step toward addressing the pervasive crime of human trafficking, also referred to as modern-day slavery.<sup>i</sup>

**Human trafficking is pervasive in Maryland and across the country.** In 2023, the National Human Trafficking Hotline (NHTH) received 30,162 reports of suspected human trafficking, leading to 9,619 confirmed cases impacting 16,999 victims; in Maryland alone, 501 reports were made, resulting in 152 cases.<sup>ii</sup> These numbers only represent a fraction of the true scale of trafficking in our state, as many victims remain reluctant to come forward, unaware of available resources, or trapped by the secretive nature of trafficking operations.

**Human trafficking preys upon society's most vulnerable, including children in the foster care system**.<sup>iii</sup> Human traffickers target children, and up to 70% of trafficked minors in the U.S. come from child social services or foster care.<sup>iv</sup> Between 2014 and 2019, Maryland's local social services departments reported over 670 child sex trafficking cases – 93% of which involved female victims, 87% involved youth aged 14-17, and more than half were people of color.<sup>v</sup>

**Maryland's extensive transportation infrastructure** – encompassing thousands of bus stops, 33 light rail stations, 14 metro stations, 10+ rest stops, 5 Amtrak stations, Baltimore/Washington International Thurgood Marshall Airport, and the Helen Delich Bentley Port of Baltimore – makes it a key location for human trafficking activities.<sup>vi</sup> HB 1 leverages this reality to safeguard vulnerable individuals by engaging the transportation sector as a critical ally in the fight against trafficking.

HB 1 will help thwart human trafficking by training transportation sector employees to identify potential victims and connect them with vital resources, without exposing them to law enforcement — an essential consideration for undocumented individuals. By tapping into the Regional Navigator program, this bill offers a proactive solution for combatting human trafficking.



This bill builds on efforts in California and New York and complements federal law, such as the Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act (TVPRA), which mandates airline carriers to train employees on identifying and responding to human trafficking.

With HB 1, Maryland has an important opportunity to protect its most marginalized residents and take a decisive stand against human trafficking.

#### Social Work Advocates for Social Change urges a favorable report on HB 1.

Social Work Advocates for Social Change is a coalition of MSW students at the University of Maryland School of Social Work that seeks to promote equity and justice through public policy, and to engage the communities impacted by public policy in the policymaking process.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>i</sup> U.S. Department of State. (2019, June). Trafficking in Persons Report June 2019. United States Department of State. <u>https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/2019-Trafficking-in-Persons-Report.pdf</u> <sup>ii</sup> National Human Trafficking Hotline. (2023). National Statistics. Humantraffickinghotline.org.

https://humantraffickinghotline.org/en/statistics

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>III</sup> U.S. Department of State. (2019, June). Trafficking in Persons Report June 2019. United States Department of State. <u>https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/2019-Trafficking-in-Persons-Report.pdf</u>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>iv</sup> U.S. Institute Against Human Trafficking. (2022). U.S. Institute against Human Trafficking. <u>https://www.usiaht.org</u> <sup>v</sup> About Child Sex Trafficking. (n.d.). Araminta. Retrieved January 15, 2025, from <u>https://aramintausa.org/about-child-</u> sex-trafficking/

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>vi</sup> Human Trafficking - Governor's Office of Crime Prevention and Policy. (n.d.). Governor's Office of Crime Prevention and Policy. Retrieved January 15, 2025, from <u>https://gocpp.maryland.gov/victim-services/human-trafficking/</u>

**HB1 - written.pdf** Uploaded by: David Pendleton Position: FWA

DAVID PENDELTON SR. Chairperson/Director

TOM CAHILL Vice Chairperson/Assistant Director

BRITTANY GARRIS Secretary



ANNAPOLIS OFFICE 99 Cathedral Street Suite 201 Annapolis, MD 21401-2597

PH: (240) 271-9420 smartmdsla@yahoo.com

### HB 1 - Department of Transportation – Human Trafficking Awareness, Training, and Response (See Someone, Save Someone Act)

Judiciary Proceedings Maryland Senate 2 East Miller Senate Office Building Annapolis, MD 21401

Chairman Smith, Vice Chairman Waldstreicher and Members of the Committee

My name is David Pendleton, I am the Director of the Maryland Safety and Legislative Board of the Transportation Division of SMART. We represent transportation-sector employees who work for MARC and Amtrak in commuter and long-distance service. I am urging a favorable report on **HB1**, the **"see someone - save someone act."** 

**HB1**would require the Maryland Department of Transportation to develop and implement a training program for our members employed in the transportation-sector on the identification and reporting of human trafficking. According to the State Department, "there are 27.6 million people globally who are subjected to human trafficking and forced labor. It's responsible for an estimated \$150 billion annually in illicit profits. Human trafficking disproportionately impacts some of the most vulnerable and underserved members of our society. It erodes the safety and health of our communities and transportation networks, the security of our borders, the strength of our economy, and the rule of law."

A 2018 Polaris Project study of 104 survivors found that 11% of human trafficking victims are transported on long-distance Amtrak Trains, and 29% on subway/commuter rail. The study also found that "the use of buses and trains may be a preferred method of transportation for traffickers because of the low cost and limited interaction with bureaucratic systems. This allows them more anonymity in the ticket buying process and less attention from officials."

Our members who work in commuter and passenger service are the first responders to any issues experienced with operations. They are in constant contact with the traveling public and are vigilant in observing their surroundings. With the proper training they can be a great asset in the fight against human trafficking. Human trafficking is a heinous crime that has no boundaries. It is perpetrated on its victims from small towns to large cities and everywhere in between. Prevention requires action and the more employees are trained in recognizing and reporting these acts the easier it is for them to **"see someone - save someone."** 

Governor Moore, in his 2024 State of the State speech, called for action on public safety as one of his top priorities. Nothing is more important than protecting the citizens of this state from criminals, especially our children.

SMART proudly supports this bill and emphatically urges a favorable report on HB1!

Sincerely,

David (Sr

David Pendleton Sr., Chairperson/Director Maryland Safety & Legislative Board, LO-023 SMART Transportation Division