

SB0170_RichardKaplowitz_FAV

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TESTIMONY ON SB#0170 - POSITION: FAVORABLE
Criminal Law - Benefits Exploitation

TO: Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee

FROM: Richard Keith Kaplowitz

My name is Richard Kaplowitz. I am a resident of District 3, Frederick County. I am submitting this testimony in support of/ SB#/0170, **Criminal Law - Benefits Exploitation**

Unfortunately, there are individuals in our society who prey on those who, through no fault of their own, do not have a will or the knowledge or the mental soundness to avoid being taken advantage of by unscrupulous persons.

This bill will make that predatory behavior a serious crime in the way it is treated. This bill will serve that goal by prohibiting a person from knowingly recruiting, harboring, transporting, or obtaining an individual for the purpose of appropriating the government benefits of an individual for the benefit of the person or another through deception, coercion, exploitation, isolation, or any other means. It would also criminalize any confederates of the person initiating this conduct by prohibiting a person from aiding, abetting, or conspiring with one or more persons to violate a certain provision of the Act. The result of a finding that this conduct exists or is planned will establish that a violation of the Act is a felony; etc.

Multiple examples of this despicable fraud and scams can be found online along with the effects on the person or persons harmed by it. This bill makes it clear that those miscreants will receive significant punishment for their actions. The seriousness of the penalty may also help to make the crimes less attractive to those who might attempt them.

I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on SB0170.