

Joshua Cunningham

Prince George's County, MD

Joy2the World

Subject: Favorable Testimony in Support of HB0829 – Human Trafficking Awareness & Prevention

Dear Committee Members,

My name is Joshua Cunningham, and I am a resident of Prince George's County, Maryland. I am writing to offer my strong and heartfelt support for HB0829, sponsored by Delegate Ebersole.

My support for this bill is both professional and deeply personal. I once experienced a vulnerable and frightening situation at a transportation port where I needed help and protection. The transportation community and workers around me failed to recognize what was happening and did not respond in a way that could have ensured my safety. That moment has stayed with me. It showed me how easily people in crisis can be overlooked when frontline workers are not trained to recognize the signs of exploitation or when they are unsure how to respond without getting in trouble.

Through my work with Joy2the World, I have seen these same gaps play out across our communities. Survivors of trafficking and exploitation often pass through transportation hubs, ride in for-hire vehicles, or interact with drivers during moments of extreme vulnerability. Transportation workers are on the front lines. Many want to help, but without training and protections, they may freeze or look away when something feels wrong.

HB0829 is a practical and compassionate step forward. Requiring human trafficking awareness training for for-hire drivers and transportation network operators equips everyday workers to recognize warning signs and respond appropriately. The good-faith liability protections matter just as much, because they remove the fear that doing the right thing could lead to punishment. Together, these provisions create safer conditions for people in danger and clearer guidance for workers who want to help.

I am grateful for Delegate Ebersole's leadership and for the General Assembly's commitment to protecting vulnerable communities. This legislation reflects what those of us working on the ground already know: prevention works best when the people most likely to witness harm are empowered to act.

I respectfully urge you to issue a favorable report on HB0829. This bill will not fix everything, but it will change real outcomes for real people who find themselves in dangerous situations with no clear place to turn.

Sincerely,

Joshua Cunningham
Prince George's County, MD
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