



MARYLAND  
CATHOLIC  
CONFERENCE

February 18, 2026

**Senate Bill 473**

**Public Utilities - For-Hire Drivers and Transportation Network Operators -  
Human Trafficking Awareness and Prevention Training and Liability  
Senate Finance 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.

**Senate Bill 473** requires an applicant for certain for-hire driver's licenses and transportation network operator's licenses to submit to the Public Service Commission documentation verifying that the applicant completed a certain human trafficking awareness training program; and prohibiting licensed taxicab drivers, for-hire drivers, or transportation network operators from being held civilly or criminally liable for reporting or responding to in good faith a suspected incident of human trafficking.

The Maryland Catholic Conference supports this legislation because it emphasizes the importance of equipping transportation professionals with the knowledge and tools necessary to identify and report human trafficking. Training those working in the transportation sector is critical to reducing trafficking, supporting law enforcement efforts, and increasing public awareness about how to intervene safely and effectively.

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>

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<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 Leo has stated, “Ultimately, the violence of human trafficking can be overcome only through a renewed vision that beholds every individual as a beloved child of God.”<sup>3</sup> This bill represents an important step in addressing the exploitation of vulnerable individuals by equipping key sectors with the training and tools necessary to recognize and prevent trafficking. By strengthening awareness and response efforts, it makes 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 **SB 473**.

Thank you for your consideration.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://mcase.org/news/post/maryland-sex-trafficking-case-shows-typical-red-flags-for-exploitation-expe>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.vaticannews.va/en/pope/news/2026-02/pope-leo-xiv-world-day-against-human-trafficking-message.html#:~:text=Pope%20Leo%20said%20the%20same,of%20God%2C%E2%80%9D%20he%20said>