

THE COALITION TO PROTECT MARYLAND'S CHILDREN

Our Mission: To combine and amplify the power of organizations and citizens working together to keep children safe from abuse and neglect. We strive to secure budgetary and public policy resources to make meaningful and measurable improvements in safety, permanence, and wellbeing.



HB1348 - Human Trafficking - Reports to Regional Navigators and Prosecutions - Authorization

Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

March 31, 2026

Position: SUPPORT

The Coalition to Protect Maryland's Children is a consortium of organizations and individuals formed in 1992 who are concerned about the care of Maryland's most vulnerable children and work together to educate and promote meaningful child welfare reform. **CPMC urges a favorable report on HB1348 - Human Trafficking - Reports to Regional Navigators and Prosecutions – Authorization.**

HB 1348 creates a clear pathway for mandated reporters—health practitioners, police officers, educators, and human service workers—to notify Regional Navigators when they suspect child sex trafficking or labor trafficking, in addition to their existing mandatory reporting obligations to local departments of social services or law enforcement. The bill authorizes these professionals to contact a Regional Navigator when, in their professional judgment, such notification is necessary to prevent serious harm to the child or other children and permits this contact even without the child's consent or over the child's express objection.

It has come to our attention that not all reports being made across the state regarding children at risk of trafficking are also resulting in referrals made to these Regional Navigators. Contact made to these specialized entities help ensure that these children are connected more quickly to trauma-informed support without requiring families to navigate complex systems alone as well as safety planning, housing, medical care, and legal assistance.

HB1348's "serious harm to the child or other children" standard recognizes that trafficking related risks often escalate quickly and may not fit neatly within traditional abuse and neglect categories. Allowing professionals to exercise their clinical and professional judgment to notify Regional Navigators in high-risk situations helps ensure that potential trafficking is addressed early, before violence, exploitation, or control become more entrenched. In practice, this means that mandatory reporters can reach out to a Regional Navigator for consultation and a coordinated response, even when they are unsure how CPS or law enforcement will classify the situation. By explicitly recognizing Regional Navigators in the Family Law reporting framework, HB1348 helps normalize collaboration between mandated reporters and specialized trafficking service providers, ensuring that children receive support that is tailored to unique dynamics of both sex and labor trafficking.

It is for these reasons that the **CPMC urges a favorable report on HB1348 - Human Trafficking - Reports to Regional Navigators and Prosecutions – Authorization.**¹

¹ Members of CPMC represented by this written testimony include – the American Academy of Pediatrics - Maryland Chapter, Child Justice, Center for Hope, Citizen's Review Board for Children, Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA - Baltimore County), Everstand, The Family Tree, Maryland Association of Resources for Families and Youth (MARFY), Maryland Children's Alliance, Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault (MCASA), Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence, National Association of Social Workers – MD (NASW), the State Council on Child Abuse & Neglect (SCCAN), TurnAround, Inc., and individual members of the coalition.

The Coalition to Protect Maryland's Children

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