



**DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES**

*Wes Moore, Governor · Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor · Rafael López, Secretary*

February 26, 2026

The Honorable Sandy Bartlett, Chair  
House Judiciary Committee  
100 Lowe House Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

**RE: TESTIMONY ON HB 1348 - HUMAN TRAFFICKING - REPORTS TO REGIONAL NAVIGATORS AND PROSECUTIONS - AUTHORIZATION - POSITION: FAVORABLE**

Dear Chair Bartlett and Members of the Judiciary Committee:

The Maryland Department of Human Services (DHS) thanks the Committee for its consideration and respectfully requests a favorable report on House Bill 1348 (HB 1348).

With offices in every one of Maryland's jurisdictions, DHS provides preventative and supportive services, economic assistance, and meaningful connections to employment development and career opportunities to assist Marylanders in reaching their full potential. Our Social Services Administration (SSA) implements the Child Safety program which is affected by HB 1348. HB 1348 empowers mandated reporters to use their discretion in determining whether to reach out to a regional navigator to report suspected child sex or labor trafficking. Mandated reporters are required to report suspected child abuse and neglect, including child sex and labor trafficking, to the Department of Social Services (DSS). However, they are currently unable to report child trafficking directly to the Regional Navigator Program.

HB 1348 gives mandated reporters, such as health practitioners, police officers, educators, and human services workers, another option to address the potential mistreatment of a child. When reporting child abuse or neglect, mandated reporters are required to notify a Local Department of Social Services (LDSS) or law enforcement. HB 1348 would give mandated reporters an additional discretionary outlet to report potential mistreatment of a child by reporting directly to a Regional Navigator. Regional Navigators are present in all 24 jurisdictions in Maryland and were established through the [Child Sex Trafficking Screening and Services Act of 2019](#).

Notably, HB 1348 would not require that a mandated reporter obtain consent from a child to submit a discretionary report to a Regional Navigator. This is important as human trafficking appears in various forms, and many scenarios exist where the victim may not be fully aware of their own exploitation and victimization.

The Department has a division within our Child Safety program that works alongside Child Protective Services (CPS) programs within the local departments to address human trafficking concerns and protect youth believed to be victims. Our team collaborates with Regional Navigators and law enforcement to ensure reports of human trafficking are properly addressed. HB1348 would strengthen our partnerships, expand access to trauma-informed services, strengthen legal accountability through enhanced prosecutorial authority, and improve overall system responsiveness to child trafficking cases.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide favorable testimony to the Committee for consideration during your deliberations. If you require additional information, please contact Justin Hayes, Acting Director of Government Affairs, at [justin.hayes1@maryland.gov](mailto:justin.hayes1@maryland.gov).

In service,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Gloria Brown Burnett". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Gloria Brown Burnett  
Interim Secretary