



Working to end sexual violence in Maryland

P.O. Box 8782
Silver Spring, MD 20907
Phone: 301-565-2277
www.mcasa.org

For more information contact:
Lisae C. Jordan, Esquire
443-995-5544

Testimony Supporting House Bill 1348
Lisae C. Jordan, Executive Director & Counsel
February 26, 2026

The Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault (MCASA) is a non-profit membership organization that includes the State's seventeen rape crisis centers, law enforcement, mental health and health care providers, attorneys, educators, survivors of sexual violence and other concerned individuals. MCASA includes the Sexual Assault Legal Institute (SALI), a statewide legal services provider for survivors of sexual assault. MCASA represents the unified voice and combined energy of all of its members working to eliminate sexual violence. We urge the Judiciary Committee to report favorably on House Bill 1348.

House Bill 1348 – Human Trafficking Regional Navigators

Maryland's Regional Navigators operate using a survivor-centered, culturally responsive, and trauma-informed model for youth under age 24 who are suspected or actively being trafficked. These specialized professionals prioritize safety planning, voluntary engagement, and trust-building. HB 1348 helps normalize collaboration between mandated reporters and specialized trafficking service providers, ensuring that children receive support that is tailored to the unique dynamics of both sex and labor trafficking.

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 directly 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.

This bill addresses concerns by various professionals that notifying Regional Navigators is not permitted or in contradiction of confidentiality laws governing their role. It prioritizing the needs of minors who are suspected of being trafficked and helps ensure their safety.

HB 1348 addresses gaps in services and referrals by explicitly allowing mandated reporters to contact Regional Navigators directly as a complementary pathway to the existing CPS and law enforcement reporting framework. This approach helps ensure that children at risk of trafficking

are connected more quickly to specialized, trauma-informed support without requiring families to navigate complex systems alone. It also leverages the existing Regional Navigator network, which is specifically designed to coordinate services, safety planning, housing, medical care, and legal assistance for child trafficking survivors across jurisdictions.

The bill'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 even more entrenched.

**The Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault urges the
Judiciary Committee to
report favorably on House Bill 1348**