



February 26, 2026

House Bill 1348
Human Trafficking - Reports to Regional Navigators and Prosecutions -
Authorization
House Judiciary 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.

House Bill 1348 authorizes mandated reporters to report suspected labor trafficking or sex trafficking of a child to a regional navigator; and authorizing the Attorney General or a State's Attorney to investigate and prosecute human trafficking.

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.¹ 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.

By allowing trained professionals to notify regional navigators when trafficking is suspected—especially in situations where a child may be too fearful or manipulated to consent—this legislation prioritizes child safety. Victims of trafficking are often under coercion, threats, or psychological control, which can prevent them from seeking help on their own. Empowering mandated reporters to act swiftly can interrupt exploitation and connect children to protective services and specialized support.

¹ <http://www.mdhumantrafficking.org/maryland>

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.”² House Bill 1348 represents an important step in confronting exploitation by strengthening identification, coordination, and response efforts. By equipping professionals with clearer authority and tools to intervene, the bill advances Maryland’s commitment to protecting vulnerable children and combating human trafficking.

For these reasons, the Maryland Catholic Conference asks for a favorable report on **HB 1348**.

Thank you for your consideration.

² <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>