

HB1348\_RichardKaplowitz\_FAV

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Richard Keith Kaplowitz

Frederick, MD 21703

**TESTIMONY ON HB#/1348- POSITION: FAVORABLE**

**Human Trafficking - Reports to Regional Navigators and Prosecutions – Authorization**

**TO:** Chair Bartlett, Vice Chair Davis, and members of the Judiciary Committee

**FROM:** Richard Keith Kaplowitz

My name is Richard Keith Kaplowitz. I am a resident of District 3, Frederick County. I am submitting this testimony in support of HB#/1348, **Human Trafficking - Reports to Regional Navigators and Prosecutions – Authorization**

This bill establishes circumstances under which reporting must occur on suspected labor trafficking or sex trafficking of a child empower the States Attorney or Attorney General to investigate the failure to report and the actual trafficking offense.

Notwithstanding any other provision of law, including any law on privileged communications, each health practitioner, police officer, educator, or human service worker, acting in a professional capacity in this state who has reason to believe that a child has been subjected to abuse or neglect:

- shall notify the local department or the appropriate law enforcement agency

if acting as a staff member of a hospital, public health agency, childcare institution, juvenile detention center, school, or similar institution:

- shall immediately notify and give all information required ... to the head of the institution or the designee of the head
- and may notify a regional navigator ...of suspected sex trafficking or labor trafficking:

if, in the professional judgment of the reporter, ... notification is necessary to prevent serious harm to the child or other children.

An individual authorized to notify a regional navigator ... may notify the regional navigator

- without the consent of the child
- and over the express objection of the child.

This important bill will authorize mandated reporters to report suspected labor trafficking or sex trafficking of a child to a regional navigator; and authorize the Attorney General or a State's Attorney to investigate and prosecute human trafficking. We can and must protect children.

**I respectfully request this committee to return a favorable report on HB#/1348.**