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DATE: **March 9, 2026**

BILL NUMBER: **HB 1484**

POSITION: **Unfavorable**

HB 1484 Child Sex Offenders – Plea Agreements and Places for Children

The Maryland State's Attorneys' Association respectfully opposes House Bill 1484, which would prohibit a State's Attorney from entering into certain plea agreements in prosecutions for human trafficking offenses involving a minor and impose additional restrictions on individuals convicted of certain offenses against minors.

Protecting children from exploitation and trafficking is a priority shared by prosecutors across Maryland. State's Attorneys prosecute these cases aggressively and work closely with law enforcement, victim advocates, and federal partners to hold offenders accountable while prioritizing the safety and well-being of victims.

HB 1484 would create significant unintended consequences that could undermine successful prosecutions and harm victims. Plea agreements are a critical prosecutorial tool that allows prosecutors to secure cooperation from co-conspirators, obtain testimony against higher-level traffickers, avoid retraumatizing minor victims through trial, and ensure swift and certain accountability.

A blanket prohibition on certain plea agreements removes necessary flexibility from prosecutors who must make case-specific decisions based on evidence, victim safety, and trial risk. In some cases, plea negotiations are the only realistic way to obtain a conviction and protect victims from the trauma of prolonged litigation.

While we share the goal of protecting children and holding traffickers accountable, House Bill 1484 removes critical prosecutorial tools needed to effectively prosecute complex trafficking cases involving minors.

For these reasons, the Maryland State's Attorneys' Association respectfully urges the Committee to issue an unfavorable report on House Bill 1484.