


F R O M	Name & Title	Dr. Leana Wen, Commissioner ^W	Health Department MEMO	
	Agency Name & Address	Health Department 1001 E. Fayette Street Baltimore, Maryland 21201		
	Subject	Council Bill 15-0524 – Labor and Employment - Human Trafficking Whistleblower Protection		

To: President and Members
of the City Council
c/o 409 City Hall

April 27, 2015

The Baltimore City Health Department (BCHD) is pleased to have the opportunity to review Council Bill 15-0524 – Labor and Employment - Human Trafficking Whistleblower Protection. The purpose of this bill is to protect employees who make a good-faith report of suspected human trafficking activity to their employer or appropriate agency from retaliation by their employer. Any employer found in violation of this law is subject to a fine of not more than \$1,000 and/or imprisonment for not more than 90 days.

According to the Maryland Human Trafficking Task Force (MHTTF), Maryland's central location has facilitated its development as both a pass-through state and a destination for human traffickers who use our many highways, especially Interstate-95, to connect victims to major east coast cities such as Baltimore, Philadelphia and D.C.ⁱ Since January 2013, MHTTF and federal law enforcement partners have identified 200 total victims of trafficking, arrested 94 human traffickers, and initiated 23 federal trafficking prosecutions in Maryland.ⁱⁱ

It is essential that individuals in a position to identify and report suspected human trafficking behavior feel comfortable doing so without fear of reprisal. This legislation will encourage an employee to report suspected human trafficking behavior seen at their place of employment by protecting the employee from potential retaliation by their employer. With more instances being reported, authorities will be better able to arrest and subsequently prosecute human traffickers in our City and State.

BCHD supports this legislation and appreciates the opportunity to discuss this important issue. We will be present at the hearing to answer any questions the Council may have on this matter.

cc: Angela Gibson, Office of the Mayor
Rianna Matthews-Brown, Chief of Staff, Department of Health
Andrew Nicklas, Director of Legislative Affairs, Department of Health

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

ⁱⁱ <http://www.mdhumantrafficking.org/statistics/>

