


F R O M	Name & Title	Dr. Leana Wen, Commissioner <i>Leana Wen</i>	Health Department MEMO	
	Agency Name & Address	Health Department 1001 E. Fayette Street Baltimore, Maryland 21201		
	Subject	Council Bill 14-0464 – Hotels - Human Trafficking Prevention		

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

April 9, 2015

The Baltimore City Health Department (BCHD) is pleased to have the opportunity to review Council Bill 14-0464 – Hotels – Human Trafficking Prevention. The purpose of this bill is to stop human trafficking in Baltimore City. The bill prohibits hotels from renting a room for less than half a day. It also requires all hotels to register with a City Department and to provide approved training to all employees on how to identify human trafficking activities and victims. BCHD supports this bill in its effort to combat human trafficking in our City.

According to the U.S. Department of Justice, 300,000 children are at risk of being prostituted in the United States.ⁱ The average age of entry into prostitution for a child victim in the United States is 13-14 years old.ⁱⁱ 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.ⁱⁱⁱ Since January 2013, MHTTF federal law enforcement partners have identified 200 total victims of trafficking, arrested 94 human traffickers, and initiated 23 federal trafficking prosecutions in Maryland.^{iv}

Hotel employees are often in an ideal position to identify potential human trafficking activity. By providing formal training on identifying human trafficking to hotel employees, more incidents of trafficking will be reported to the authorities. 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 as written and appreciates the opportunity to discuss this important issue. BCHD is ready and able to assist in reviewing the employee training material used by the hotels, but we would be concerned if language were added requiring the Health Department to enforce the bills requirements. BCHD inspections of hotels are limited to health inspections related to the hotels' function as a food service facility. 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

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- ⁱ <http://thecoveringhouse.org/act/resources-2/sex-trafficking-statistics-source-documentation/>
 - ⁱⁱ <http://thecoveringhouse.org/act/resources-2/sex-trafficking-statistics-source-documentation/>
 - ⁱⁱⁱ <http://www.mdhumantrafficking.org/maryland/>
 - ^{iv} <http://www.mdhumantrafficking.org/statistics/>